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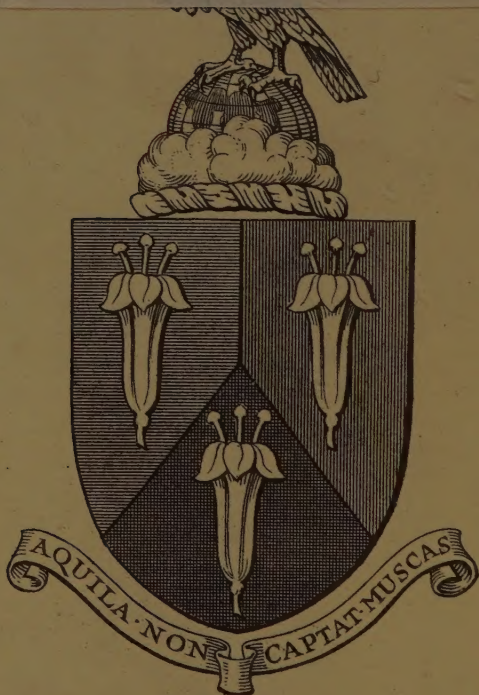
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THE ANTIQUARIES' PRIMERS.

Ancient Earthworks.

BY

J. CHARLES WALL, O

AUTHOR OF


"Ancient Earthworks,"

in various volumes of the "Victoria History of the Counties of England;"

"An Old English Parish," &c.

With Sixty-nine Illustrations.

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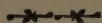
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N O T E .



THE object of these Primers is to provide the initial ground upon which more extensive study may be founded, to meet the need felt by those who, possessing antiquarian inclinations, may yet be no antiquaries, and to make the consideration of the various phases of early life in these islands intelligible.

To this intent simplicity is adhered to, and as it is easier to grasp things when pictorial representations are combined with the text, numerous illustrations are inserted.

ANCIENT EARTHWORKS forms the least popular subject in the study of antiquities, because no effort has hitherto been made to bring it before those who are not already versed in the defensive warfare of the earlier inhabitants of Great Britain. Yet nearly every neighbourhood has some such work in its vicinity, an earthwork of some type or another, and it is lamentable to find such utter ignorance in the people of the locality of these historic

landmarks. The indifference of rural school teachers towards these things is especially to be deplored, as, when children are instructed in any subject that may be exemplified to their reason in their own neighbourhood, that object puts zest into their lessons and encourages patriotism.

The most flighty legends attached to these works in some districts are often received as facts handed down by oral tradition, distorted by repetition, and perpetuated by irresponsible guide books; and that is all the *knowledge* one finds.

This is but an introduction to a vast subject, and to adhere strictly to our title we are precluded from a consideration of certain historic strongholds, as Whitetor on Dartmoor, or the vitrified forts of Scotland, because they are of stone.

General views are almost lacking in this volume, because as a rule the trenches and ramparts render such impossible, and plans form the bulk of the illustrations.

Gratitude is here expressed to Mr. H. S. King for having kindly corrected these sheets.

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ANCIENT EARTHWORKS.



NO class of ancient monument in England has been so neglected, and little thought of, as the earthen defences and forts of our British forefathers, and of the various invaders of the island, the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans. Yet they are all around us, distributed over the whole land ; played over by generations of children ; utilised as ready-made bull rings, when the baiting of bulls was in vogue ; and anathematised by farmers as a useless incumbrance to the earth ; but with never a thought of the stern purposes of warfare, or the protection of the home, for which they had their origin and played an important part in history, although it may be at too early an age for written records, and that history has only—in part—been revealed by archæological research.

Even antiquaries have dealt shyly with the subject until in recent years General Pitt Rivers, Mr. St. John Hope, and Mr. I. Chalkley Gould have done valuable work by their individual researches. On July 10th, 1901, the various Archæological Societies, assembled in Congress, suggested a scheme by which these various early works of the spade should be classified, and the study of them is now being pursued on a scientific basis.

“Ancient Earthworks” may have a forbidding sound, but the subject need by no means be of a dry character. There is no reason why these intensely interesting monuments should be left solely to the consideration of the Learned Societies, nor be monopolised by the pages of their Transactions; and it shall be our work to see how these banks and ditches contain a vast fund of information to everyone interested in the history of Old England, and help to make clear at least one aspect of the struggle for freedom and for conquest in olden times.

A knowledge of these things will give us a keener appreciation of those Ancient Britons, who, to many minds, are presented only as a horde of painted savages: whilst, however primitive in their customs, they exhibited great ingenuity and engineering skill in the planning of their fortifications, and the construction of them must have entailed untold labour and exemplary patience, considering the simple implements at their command.

We shall see the works of men who lived some five thousand years ago, the marked difference in the system of their Roman conquerors, whose occupation of Britain for over three centuries has left an indelible mark over the land. Invading Saxons, harrying Vikings, and Norman warriors, each found the need of trenches and ramparts of earth; and each successive people more or less varied the use of Mother Earth by a different construction.

Later periods are represented by earthworks combined with masonry, while other works—of domestic defence rather than of essentially military character—are seen in the moats of manor houses; and yet others for purely peaceable purposes are the boundary banks of estates, dykes for the reclamation of land, and mediæval fish-pools. The burial mounds, or

tumuli, are true earthworks, but form a class by themselves: the monuments of the honoured dead among prehistoric Britons are numerous, and are found as late as the Civil War between Royalists and Round-heads, simple memorials which are still in a manner seen in the mounds raised over the departed in our churchyards.

It will be asked how the period of one earthwork may be distinguished from that of another. In many cases this is impossible, though much may be determined by comparative archæology.

There exist sundry descriptions of the defences and forts of the Britons in the pages of some of the classical authors, whose countrymen had cause to remember the strength of those ramparts when engaged in the task of conquest under the imperial standards. Although these descriptions are very meagre they are a contribution to a definition. Further evidence is found in the principle of construction, in the similarity of idea—though no two are alike—seen in those hill forts. But the comparative date is only decisively found in the implements of war or domestic use which have been discovered embedded in the works, by which it is made clear whether they were occupied in the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, or the Iron Age, by Roman or post-Roman inhabitants; and when relics of successive ages are found the earliest remains point most nearly to the period of construction.

Documentary evidence also exists as to the Roman mode of entrenching in the writings of Polybius, Vegetius, etc., and the plan there described was more or less followed in the construction of camps and stations in Britain, though it would appear that they sometimes occupied those works vacated by the Britons, when alterations to suit their own requirements were made in the same.

After the withdrawal of the Romans the same strongholds would once more be inhabited by the original tribes. This period of the construction of fortifications is not so clear; the Britons had learnt much from their late masters, but oppression had enfeebled their energy; taught to obey they had forgotten to originate, and by their remaining utensils is their presence known rather than by any distinctive work in earth. At the same time, with wisdom gained through adversity, the necessary defences against the inroads of Picts or of Saxons were probably formed after a Roman model.

Thus it will be seen how easily the original works might lose some of their primitive features, and the later camps of the Britons exhibit signs quite foreign to the earlier native entrenchments.

Successive invasions of the Saxons and Danes have yet further confused the existing works; but the Saxons apparently introduced an entirely new method of defence during the period of Danish incursions, namely, the Mount and Fosse, the Danejon, a form common to the north-European peoples, which, in turn, was adapted by the Normans and became the Donjon, or Keep, when masonry augmented the earthworks.

Both documentary and pictorial evidence come to our aid in this type of fort, and we shall be able to understand how the summits of the mounts were surmounted by woodwork.

The growth of the use of masonry in the construction of strongholds did not entirely abolish the utility of earthworks, although they became a secondary rather than a primary consideration; and in a manuscript of the time of James I, we find mention of "The turffe bulwarke neare ye Castle of Sandwich;" and "The like bulwarke of turffe in ye Castle of

Deale," and also "the Claie Bulwarke." Since the invention of high explosives, the far-reaching and great piercing power of modern projectiles, earthworks are again found to be of greater resistance and protection than any fortification of stone; and in the rifle pits and trenches of the present day we find a curious similarity to the defensive works of the ancient Britons.

With all that has been attained in this subject by study and research much is left to be accomplished, a task becoming more difficult by the destruction and disfigurement by mankind which grows apace, working havoc with these historic mounds. Earthworks are the most indestructible of man's handiwork when left to natural causes; true, the ages of weathering have gradually reduced the heights of the earthen walls, while the washings of the soil from above and the centuries of leaf deposits have lessened the depth of the trenches.

Other agencies than man's destroying power which contribute towards the weakening of these works are not great. Where the ramparts are wholly of earth with no core of stone, the burrowing of rabbits is responsible for disfigurement of form and partial collapse of the earth. The tread of cattle produces a slow levelling process; and the behaviour of sheep sometimes destroys the lines of defence, as at the camp on Lawley Hill, in Shropshire, where they have a habit of scratching away the soil of the escarpments to obtain shelter from the sun.

All these causes combined are not so destructive as are the doings of the human race, whose booted tread is a rapid means of demolition on some frequented spot.

A popular position to watch the course of the hounds is the rampart of Burrough Camp, near

Melton Mowbray, which, in the season, is thickly lined by excited spectators. Coed y Gaer, near Oswestry, and many other camps, are favoured spots for picnics, where the attendant revels reduce the ancient work. When made a common playground as Castle Hill, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire; or the site of bonfires as at The Beacon, Martinhoe, Devon, continual mutilation is at work.

More serious to history in the loss of ancient monuments is the spread of great towns, when suburban houses or increase of factories are necessarily fatal to such antiquities that may stand in their way.

Where stones have been largely used in the construction of ancient works another source of danger is provided; villagers have raided the mount of Mountsorrel, Leicestershire, for stones to repair their cottage enclosures; while the camps on Titterstone Clee and Abdon Burf, Shropshire, are tempting local railway companies to possess themselves of the coveted material wherewith to lay the beds of their permanent ways.

The extravagant economy of the present age also makes farmers to grudge any spot on arable land to go untilled, and year by year many earthworks perish. One notable case is at Stoke Fleming, Devon, where the estimates for levelling the great vallum and fosse of Woodbury Camp—a veritable stronghold—being too exorbitant, the farmer put his own men on the work; it proved of greater labour than anticipated—the remains of the vallum stand 9 ft. above the level ground, and 14 ft. above a 5 ft. fosse—and when it is levelled with the field long years must pass before that spot will yield any fruit, for that great agger is composed of piled stones with but a thin covering of earth.

We could wish it had been possible to have represented the plans on one consistent scale; but with the limited size of these pages a great variation is unavoidable.

In attempting to breathe life into the dry bones of antiquity, and make them a pleasing and useful reality, we will err on the side of simplicity.

The earliest definition of Ancient Earthworks is from the pen of the Venerable Bede:—"For a wall is made of stones, but a rampart with which camps are fortified to repel the assaults of enemies is made of sods cut out of the earth and raised above the ground all round like a wall, having in front of it the ditch whence the sods were taken, and strong stakes of wood fixed upon its top." (Book I, c. 5.)

In this study certain terms are used, some of which, while different one from another, more or less represent the same object, and are found variously applied by many of the older antiquaries. Although it were better, if possible, to restrict classical terminology for the works of the Roman period, some of the terms—as better describing the works—will be used irrespective of ages. Some of these names have a wider significance, but are only given here as restricted to earthworks, thus:—

VALLUM, an earthen wall.

RAMPART, or Breastwork, usually indicates the *vallum* immediately in front of the defenders, above the level of the interior of the camp; but is sometimes used indiscriminately with *vallum*.

RAMPART
OR VALLUM

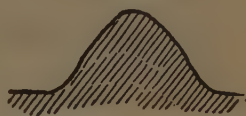


FIG. I.

AGGER, a heap or pile of earth, applied to a rampart or bulwark, a bank or a dam. It is used in

the same sense as *vallum*, though generally as a wall other than encircling.

FOSSE, a dry moat or ditch, generally on the exterior of a *vallum*; and sometimes forms a covered way by which the defenders could pass from one part of the entrenchments to another without exposing themselves to the missiles of the besiegers.



FIG. 2.

DITCH, sometimes used for a *fosse*; but is better applied to the hollow accompanying the bank of a pastoral boundary.

MOAT, generally applied to the ditch of water around the site of a mediæval building.

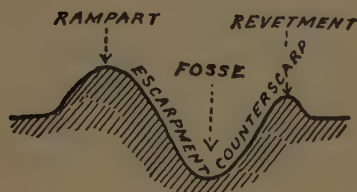


FIG. 3.

ESCARPMENT, or SCARP, the declivity on the outer side of a *vallum*, which is also the inner side of a *fosse*.

COUNTERSCARP, the exterior slope of a *fosse* opposite the *scarp*.

REVETMENT, a bank on the top of the *counterscarp*.

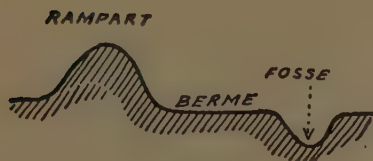


FIG. 4.

BERME, a space of ground, a terrace, or platform of earth between the *vallum* and the *fosse*.

SUNKEN-ROAD, an excavated path for the protection of the defenders of a fortification.

TUMULUS, a burial mound.

BARROW, a burial mound.

To make these terms perfectly clear, a diagram of an imaginary elevation and mode of representing a plan of the same is appended; in the latter the thick end of the line indicates the top of a slope and the tapering end the foot of the slope; where this line is continued in dots the artificial work ends upon, and is continued by, the natural slope of the hill.

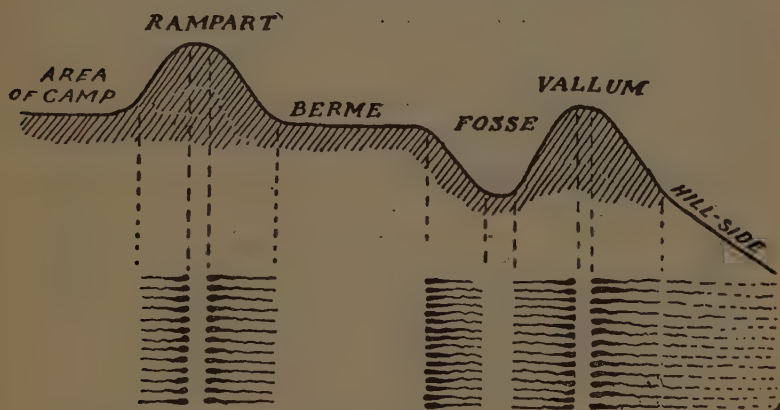


FIG. 5.—Section of Earthworks and mode of showing the same in plan.

It has been mentioned that the only reliable evidence by which the period of construction of the prehistoric earthworks may be approximately decided is the character of the implements found in excavating. When such articles are discovered, the dates of the periods to which they belong will be required—a most difficult subject on which to attempt a conclusion. The periods would naturally overlap, and whilst the period of Bronze may have opened, stone implements would still be in use, and bronze would continue long into the next Age before iron became general.

These periods on the Continent preceded the same in Britain, and it is but roughly that an approximate

date can be applied to the various Ages in this land which may define the time of the formation of some earthworks.

Stone Age, Palæolithic ...

„ „ Neolithic to B.C. 1400.

Bronze Age B.C. 1400 to B.C. 500.

Iron Age B.C. 500 to B.C. 150.

Roman occupation ... { In the south A.D. 43,
generally A.D. 84
to A.D. 436.

Romano-British period ... A.D. 43 to A.D. 457.

Saxon period A.D. 457 to A.D. 1066.

Danish influence ... A.D. 787 to A.D. 1018.

Norman invasion ... A.D. 1066

Wooden Stockading.

That wood was used in the fabrication and as supplementary defences of the British, Roman, and English strongholds is evident; but the perishable character of the material has left but few traces.

When Cæsar says that the Britons made their habitations like the Gauls; and that the people of Kent, the district more immediately under his observation, differed little in their manners from the Gallicans, we naturally look to his description of their mode of fortification for a hint as to the erection of similar works in Kent. He says that the usual form of the walls of their towns was composed of straight beams, connected lengthwise, and 2 ft. distant from each

other at equal intervals, are together placed on the ground; they are mortised on the inside and covered with plenty of earth; and the intervals closed up in front by large stones. Being thus laid and fixed together, another row is added above, in such a manner that the same interval may be observed, and that the beams may not touch one another, but equal spaces intervening, each row of beams is kept firmly in its place by a row of stones. In this manner the whole wall is consolidated, until the regular height is complete. This work, with respect to appearance and variety, is not unsightly, owing to the alternate rows of beams and stones, which preserve their order in right lines.¹ This timber-work would appear to have formed a trellis-work; and such was found by French antiquaries in the ramparts of Hastedon, and by Major-General Lane Fox in the Danevirke, Jutland.²

This mode of construction has not yet been discovered in England, but something which may indicate similar methods has been found at Mount Caburn Camp—in Kent—near Lewes. In the escarpment of the inner vallum, on the north-west side of the camp, some stake-holes were found 3 ft. deep from the line of the original surface, containing remains of carbonised wood, and in the outer vallum three stake-holes contained similar fragments. Only a small portion of the vallum was excavated, so that we cannot tell the extent or number of these relics, which, judging by other objects found on the spot, are of a pre-Roman date.

Stake-holes, indicating an additional defence of stockading above the earthen valla of the Britons, have been occasionally found; a line of such holes on the rampart are all round the camp of Uffington

¹ *De Bell. Gall.*, VII, 23.

² *Archæologia*, XLVI, 460.

Castle, Berkshire, and others on the ramparts of Worlebury, imply the former use of palisades.

Another defensive use of stakes employed by the British is again gleaned from the pages of Cæsar, who says that when his troops arrived at the only ford by which he could cross the Thames into the territories of Cassivellaunus—presumably Brentford—he perceived the British were marshalled on the other bank of the river; the bank was defended by sharp stakes fixed in front, and stakes of the same kind were fixed under the water.¹ Bede, by report, describes these stakes as apparently about the thickness of a man's thigh, and cased with lead.² Mr. Montagu Sharpe has been at great pains to determine the locality of the ford and the presence of this defence, and his researches have resulted in proving that no ancient stakes have been found in the Thames except at Brentford, where the remains of an extensive line still exists in the bed of the river for 1,200 ft. below Isleworth Ferry. The stumps of over one hundred of the stakes have been dredged up, and those remaining have been levelled with the fore-shore. From the same source we gather that in 1881 a threefold line of stakes, with wattles and boughs interlacing them, was laid bare at a depth of 10 ft. below the level of the bank. These were oak saplings, 15 in. in circumference, roughly pointed at the lower end, and black, with no sign of decay. No leaden covering has been found to any of them and probably the report conveyed to the historian Bede was but gossip.

Defences of sharpened stakes have occasionally been discovered, as at Bantham Camp, Bigbury Bay, south-west of Devon, where piles, pointed by burning, are fixed in the adjacent marsh.

¹ *De Bell. Gall.*, V, 18.

² *Hist. Eccl.*, I, 2.

Stockading was also largely used by the Romans, and its application to fortifications is made clear from the military treatises of that people. The *valli*, or stakes, formed part of the impedimenta of the army on the march, and were used as a breastwork, or *chevaux-de-frise*, on the top of the vallum. These palisades were of split oak 12 ft. long, one-third of the length was embedded in the ground, and each of them had a notch 3 ft. long from the top and 4 in. wide, so that when two were placed together a loop-hole was formed. At intervals the line of palisades was supported by a timber buttress, or turrets. Thus "Vacula repaired the rampart and turrets of the camp."¹

A portion of a Roman stockade was discovered over a century ago preserved in peaty ground along the line of the vallum near ETOCETUM, or Wall, in Staffordshire. Extensive remains of Roman palisading have also been found in three places at Carlisle, which, if continued, would have formed a stockade around the city. These stakes were of oak, about 6 in. by 4 in. in thickness, set

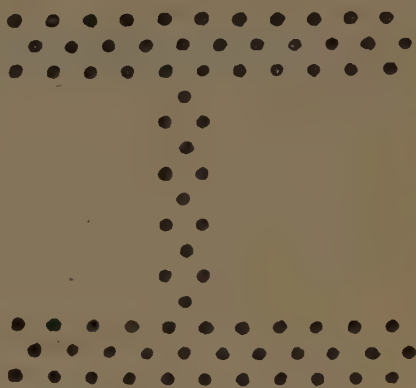


FIG. 6.—Stockades at Carlisle.

in three parallel lines about a foot apart, with the same distance between each row. Another section was composed of two such rows with a cross row connecting them (Fig. 6). They were found from 6 ft. to 12 ft. below the surface, were about 4 ft. long, and the tops

¹ Tacitus, *History*, B. IV, c. 35.

of all of them were pointed, proving that they were for defensive purposes. A deposit of several feet of Roman fragments above them indicates their very early date, and that they existed before the stone wall was built.

Timber was also used in the defence of those forts of the Mount type of Saxon and Norman times, as we shall see under CLASS D; and for similar purposes through the Middle Ages. An example of the latter is seen on the south side of the fosse of Hadrian's Wall, the boundary line between the castle court and city of Carlisle, which was probably that stockade around the castle erected by Bishop John de Halton, for which he was allowed £5 : 5s. for timber by the Crown, as seen in the Liberate Rolls of 1301.

Dunwich was protected by a deep ditch and high bank, upon which was a palisade so late as the time of Henry III; and from a Close Roll of the year 1225 it appears that timber was used in the defences of the castles of the Welsh border.

Many other records are extant containing references to wooden defences combined with earthworks, but these instances will enable the reader to imagine the additional protection of wood upon the earthen defences dealt with in the following pages.

Classification.

- A. Fortresses partly inaccessible, by reason of precipices, cliffs, or water, additionally defended by artificial works, usually known as promontory fortresses.
- B. (1) Fortresses on hill-tops with artificial defences, *following the natural line of the hill;*

- B. (2) Or, though usually on high ground, less dependent on natural slopes for protection.
- C. Rectangular or other simple enclosures, including forts and towns of the Romano-British period.
- D. Forts consisting only of a mount with encircling ditch or fosse.
- E. Fortified mounts, either artificial or partly natural, with traces of an attached court or bailey, or of two or more such courts.
- F. Homestead moats, such as abound in some low-land districts, consisting of simple enclosures formed into artificial islands by water moats.
- G. Enclosures, mostly rectangular, partaking of the form of F, but protected by stronger defensive works, ramparted and fossed, and in some instances provided with outworks.
- H. Ancient Village sites protected by walls, ramparts, or fosses.
- X. Defensive works which fall under none of these headings :—
 - (a) Dykes.
 - (b) Parallel, and isolated entrenchments.
 - (c) For unknown purposes.
 - (d) Mediæval drainage.
 - (e) Dene-holes.
 - (f) Amphitheatres.
 - (g) Fish-ponds.
 - (h) Tumuli.
 - (i) Moot-Hills.

Entrances and Divisions (or Traverses) of Strongholds.

Before entering upon a description of the earlier examples, there are certain features frequently recurring in Classes A and B which it will be wise to review in order to better understand the scheme of design when considering the various strongholds. These points are the defence of an entrance, and the divisions of the interior area.

Entrances.—The entrances to the earlier fortifications, both promontory camps and hill forts, frequently exhibit a cunning ingenuity that redounds to the credit of the primitive warriors. Those described as “involved” entrances, are mazes of intricacies; aggers and banks provide a series of ramparts worming between an apparently confused number of fosses; but each with its set purpose, and when the serpentine path to the refuge beyond is carefully followed, it will be found that the whole of it is dominated by some position, and each position covered by another yet stronger. Such will be found at Yarnbury, Wiltshire, and in many other strongholds, but two of the best examples are at Maiden Castle, Dorsetshire.

The western entrance to Maiden Castle is the more involved of the two (Fig. 7). It may be said to have seven great valla and four huge fosses—the former sometimes rising 62 ft. in height—but they are so formed in lengths to permit of the circuitous paths between them that the number of aggers between the outermost and innermost is varied. Between some of these towering earthen walls—the summit of one being 124 ft. from another—is the chasm-like fosse in which an enemy, confused in the maze may unwittingly have entered, would be overwhelmed; between others are the grassy slopes which give

access to the interior. Other openings—like one towards the north of the plan—defended by contracting vallum and a mound between three ways, lead in one case to a *cul-de-sac*, in another to the

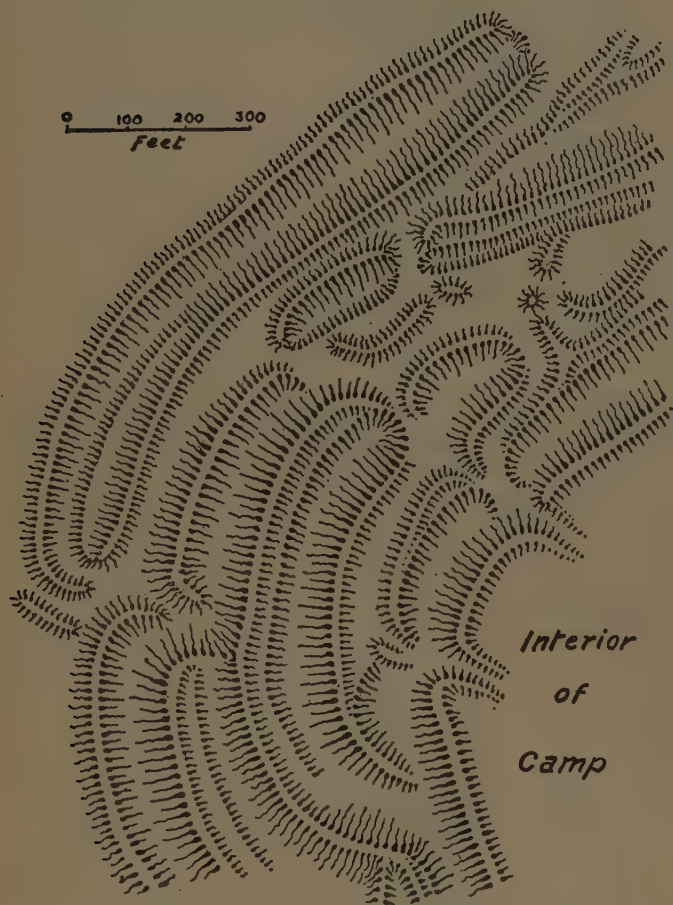


FIG. 7.—Western Entrance, Maiden Castle.

depths of a fosse, and one only is of vital import. Thus it will be seen how bodies of the besiegers could be enticed into traps and overcome piecemeal.

And this strategical work is proved by articles unearthed to be at least as old as the Bronze Period.

Other camps, less elaborate than Maiden Castle,

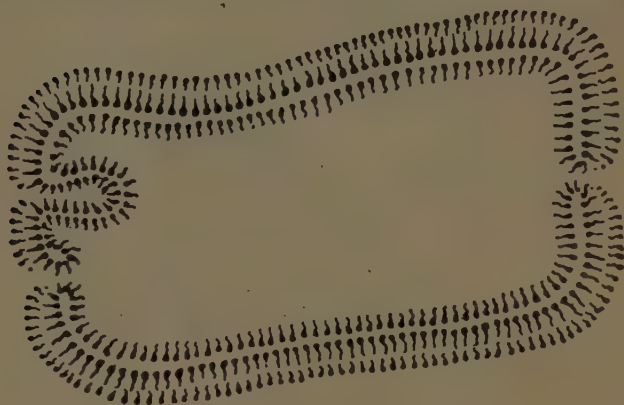


FIG. 8.—Berry Castle.

often had false entrances, into which an enemy might fight his way only to find himself surrounded by the

defenders, and with no retreat but by the way he came, which the crush of his own followers would forbid.

This is seen in Berry Castle Camp, Devon (Fig. 8), where a *cul-de-sac* is a little to the north of the actual entrance. At Membury Castle, near Axminster (Fig. 9), a similar trap



FIG. 9.—Membury Castle.

is constructed in a graceful curve of the vallum at the north-eastern entrance, and is dominated by a high rampart, which broadens at one extremity to give a footing to a body of defenders. This is of pre-Roman date.

A simple and frequent mode of defending an entrance is by a curve in the ends of the vallum. The commonest form is an inward curve, so pronounced in the Wrekin (Fig. 25, p. 45); Caer Caradoc, Clun; and Caynham Camp; in Shropshire; Dumpton Great Camp, in Devon; and Borrough Camp, Leicestershire. In such cases, anyone entering the camp would have to run the gauntlet of assaults from either side, for a distance of 100 ft. or so, before gaining the interior.

The end of the vallum sometimes curves outwards when there is an outer vallum to support it. A good example is at "The Ditches," Rushbury, Shropshire (Fig. 10), where the innermost of three ramparts, on one side of the eastern entrance, curves past the middle vallum and abuts on the inner side of the outermost. At Bury Ditches, N. Lydbury (Fig. 11), an inturned vallum on one side of the south-western entrance confronts an outcurved one on the other side, while the passage thus formed is covered by the extension of a double outer vallum across the opening; at the eastern entrance each side has an inturned rampart.

Sometimes one of these earthen walls curves around, embracing the ends of other ramparts, and continuing as another vallum at a different level.

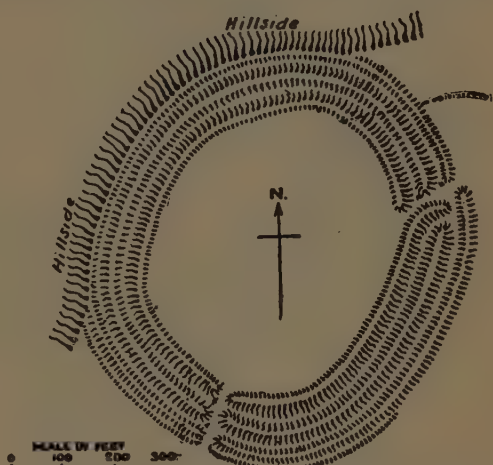


FIG. 10.—The Ditches, Rushbury, Salop.

This may be seen to advantage in the western entrance to Old Oswestry, and will more easily be

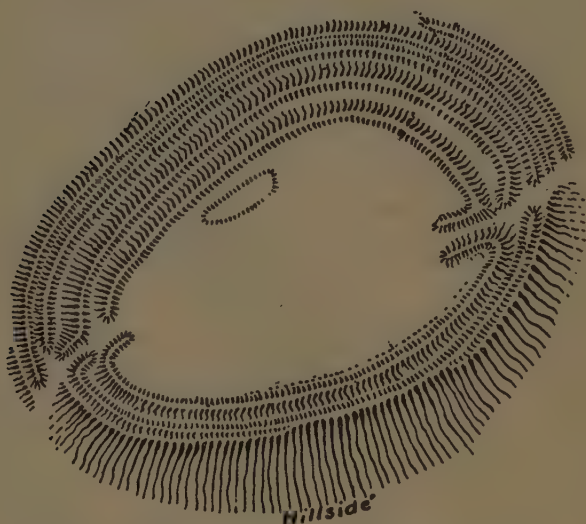


FIG. 11.—Bury Ditches, N. Lydbury, Salop.

understood from the plan (Fig. 53, p. 100) than from a more detailed description.

At Burrow Camp, Hopeway, Shropshire, the valla or ramparts converge as they approach the eastern entrance, and unite at the path (Fig. 14, p. 24), preserving some of the fosses from the inroads of an enemy. When there is more than one line of circumvallation the various ramparts are generally so arranged that the path passes through it in an oblique direction, thus giving it an enhanced value, the defenders on each of them being able to play upon the enemy at the same time ; thus, even if one should be carried by assault, it is by no means certain that an invader will carry the position ; but if the path passes straight through the lines, one rush might attain the conquest of the fort.

The arrangement of the ramparts at Sidbury (Fig. 12) would allow the defenders to concentrate a cross-fire of arrows or javelins on anyone who had passed the first entrance; and should the rash intruder succeed in carrying this position he would have to run the gauntlet of an uphill passage 200 ft. long—made by an extension of the ramparts—before he could gain the interior, whilst the entrance to Blackbury Castle (Fig. 29, p. 54) is unique.



FIG. 12.—Sidbury Castle.

Small isolated mounds were often raised in the midst of an entrance, whereby an assailing force would be divided, at the same time harassed by a group of warriors occupying that mound. These are seen in the camps at Buckland Brewer, Devon; Maiden Castle, Dorset (Fig. 26, p. 48); Caer Caradoc, Salop (Fig. 21, p. 39); and numerous others.

Another quite usual feature at an entrance is the widening and heightening of the ends of the ramparts, thus providing a commanding position for a body of defenders. Examples will be constantly

seen in the diagrams interspersed throughout this volume.

Pitfalls are also found, and in Holne Chase Castle, Devon (Fig. 13), the main entrance possesses three

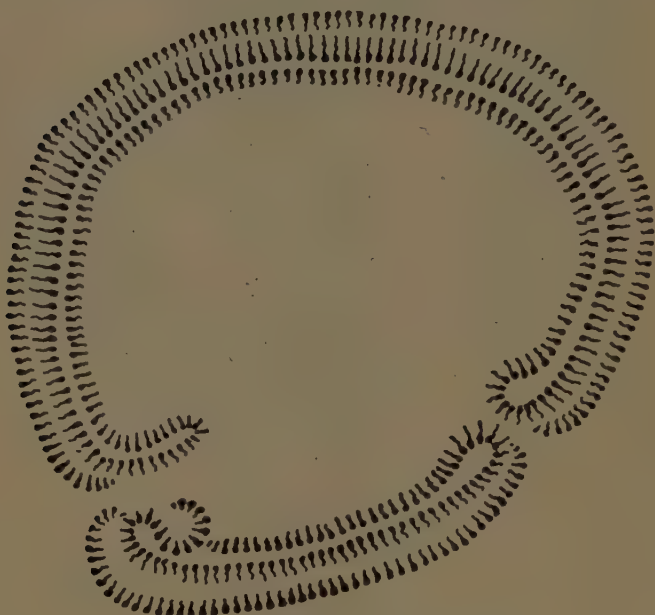


FIG. 13.—Holne Chase Castle.

of these features combined for one object, although otherwise but simply defended. The path inwards is necessarily slightly oblique by reason of the position of the ends of the fosse, the northern rampart incurves 60 ft. into the camp, the southern rampart, rising to 12 ft., is of considerable breadth, and within its inward curve nestles a circular excavation 22 ft. in diameter, with an opening towards the entrance. By this arrangement it will be seen how the only possible means of ingress would be, first between a deep fosse, then high ramparts, and if this were passed, the opposition from the interior, and merciless attack from

the inturned rampart, would drive the raiders into the pit, thus adding to their discomfiture if not defeat.

Many other arrangements with these devices are found over England, but these examples sufficiently explain the manipulation of earth and the principles governing the formation of entrances ; while we have seen that the mode of closing the opening in the vallum was by felled trees.

Divisions.—In a great number of the hill forts aggers and scarps are found to cross the internal area of the camp, dividing it into two or more portions. These traverses have been said to indicate the limits of a smaller and earlier stronghold before the enlargement to its present dimensions. In this way have the scarps seen in Caer Caradoc, Church Stretton (Fig. 21, p. 39) ; and Maiden Castle, Dorsetshire (Fig. 26, p. 48), been explained ; but a careful consideration of the sites will prove it was not so. The strategic requirements would not allow of this in either case. At Caer Caradoc it would have meant the loss of an important position in the defences ; and at Maiden Castle it would have imperilled the besieged by giving the assailant as good a position as they themselves held ; it would have reduced its value to that of a promontory camp without the same reason for thus doing. In this case it was the entrenching of the whole hill-top, or none at all. The traverses in these examples was the adaptation of the various levels of the summits to supplementary defences. In Musbury Castle and Hembury Fort, both in Devon, where there was no natural terracing to take advantage of, the traverses are entirely artificial ; in the former, it is clear that they were for successive defences should the outer works be carried ; in the latter, it would confuse an intruding invader and

divide his forces, in addition to which it would probably define that portion allotted to the horses and chariots or to cattle (Fig. 22, p. 40); for both Cæsar¹ and Strabo² tell us the Britons collected their cattle and lodged them within the enclosures.

The same principle is more highly developed on the summits of the Wrekin (Fig. 25, p. 45) and Pontesford Hill, Salop, especially the former, where the traverse is as strong as the outer circumvallation, and forms two distinct camps adjoining each other, and, by the position of the fosses and inturned entrances, providing the strongest position on the higher ground.

At Burrow Camp, Salop, the traverse not only divides the fort into two portions, but, taking advantage of the natural contour of the ground and turning at an obtuse angle, it commands the southern entrance to a remarkable degree (Fig. 14).

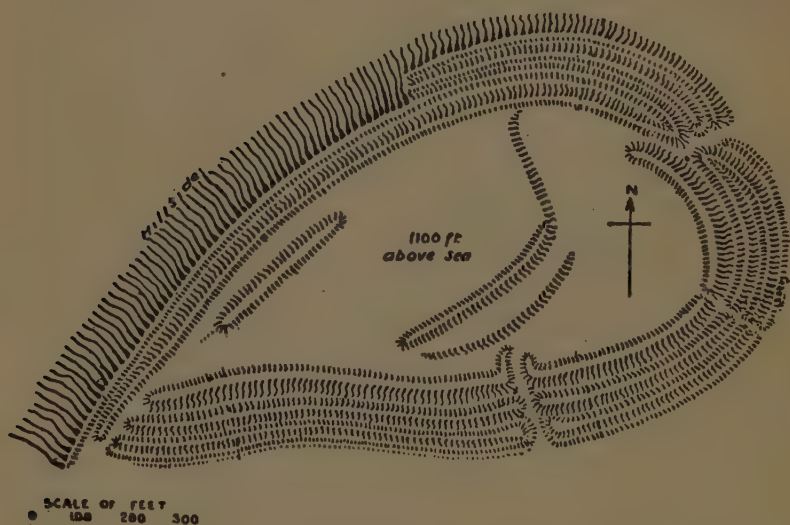


Fig. 14.—Burrow Camp, Hopesay, Salop.

¹ *De Bell Gall.*, V, xxi.

² *Strabo*, IV, v, §2.

It has been said by one great authority on this subject that the ancient tribes had no system of successive forts to guard their frontiers; a little study of the tribal boundaries and the natural features of those localities, however, support the common-sense theory that the forts were something more than a refuge for the inhabitants of that particular hill-side or adjacent valley; the clan extended beyond a few acres. From the scant documentary evidence extant, we read that every state, or tribe, was torn asunder by factions;¹ but we also know that in the face of a common danger certain of these tribes united to resist the Roman arms.

To glance at a few instances of systematic frontier defence, the Goidelic inhabitants of Devon were between the Carnabii of Cornwall on the west, and the Durotriges of Dorset on the east. On the western boundary an extensive double fort is at Northcott, on the River Tamar; a plateau camp on the high bank of a tributary of the Thrushel, at Stowford; two in the parish of Dunterton on the bank of the Tamar, where a five-fold curve in the river would provide opportunities for a stealthy raid by the Carnabii; others are near Milton Abbot and Tavistock, but south of this the broad estuary of the Tamar is the only remaining defence. The ancient line of demarcation between the people of Devon and the Durotriges, or Morini, towards the east, was the River Axe: here we find a series of immense strongholds in their respective territories on either side of that river. On the Morini side are the forts of Hawksdown, Musbury, Lambert's Castle, Conig Castle, and Pillesdon; and the opposing forts of the Damnonii are Woodbury, Sidbury, Membury, Hembury, Dumpdon, and Stockland.

¹ Tacitus, *Agricola*, c. 12.

Along the Welsh border and the River Clun are great hill forts so arranged as to be in touch with each other, and where intervening hills obstruct the view one from another, small enclosures occupy various points overlooking the valleys, by which a chain of signals could rapidly be telegraphed through the tribal lands. This border defence was supplemented by a later people with a line of the Mount type of fortress.

Continuous strongholds are found from the Severn to Southampton; from the Severn to the fens beyond Peterborough; and in many other directions, that we cannot but think the primitive races exercised greater intelligence than they have received credit for, and modern *savants* who recognise no skill and forethought in these people most cruelly malign them.

While the names of many earthworks in Wales and on the border line have reference to some person or deed connected with them, such association is nearly lost in England, probably through changes in the language; Wales alone retaining a near relation to the tongue of the people who raised many of these works.

Although *Caer*, or *Din*, may truly apply to the hill forts when considered in the ancient British sense, the term *Castle* conveys a different idea to the modern mind than an earthen rampart around a height.

At the same time, however inapplicable these names may be, by them are they generally known and entered on the maps of the Ordnance Survey, and with a warning against receiving them as ancient, or literally, we must abide by them.

Greater confusion is caused by the repetition of the same name being given to different works. Three forts are known as "Castle Dykes" in Devonshire alone, and the multiplication of "Berry," "Burrow,"

“Hembury,” “Grimm’s Dyke,” and others, is misleading. The two great neighbouring works of Cadbury Castle and Dolbury Castle in Somersetshire may be confused with two of the same names in the adjacent county of Devon, especially as the same legend of hidden treasure is appropriated by both couples.

CLASS A.

Fortresses partly inaccessible by reason of precipices, cliffs, or water, additionally defended by artificial works, usually known as Promontory Fortresses.

Promontories are generally understood as tongues of land projecting from the coast line into the sea, and whilst this is perfectly right, the same features are found in hilly regions of inland districts, where a spur of a hill suddenly terminates with precipitous sides, access to the point only being gained from the ridge of the hills. Similar positions may also be found for this purpose on lower ground, where the firm land utilised for a fort is, for the greater part, surrounded by the curve of a river, a confluence of rivers, or impassable marshes.

Under these conditions the stronghold is formed by artificial defences constructed across the isthmus, cutting off the extreme end of the promontory, which appears to have been sought as a refuge for a final stand when the people attacked had been driven from their habitations.

A very definite example of such a fortress is at Bolt Tail, south-west of Devonshire (Fig. 15). The ground ascends towards the sea, taking a sweeping dip before finally rising to the bold headland; a rampart 900 ft. long has been made across the narrowest part of the headland, which cuts off about

12 acres. This vallum is 20 ft. thick at the base, and, in places, is 16 ft. high; its outer side is supported by a dry wall 4 ft. in height (Fig. 16). The entrance is formed obliquely by the incurved ends of the rampart, which broadens on the right-hand side. On the right of the entrance is an outwork of stone (Fig. 17) in the form of an arc, upon a mound 13 ft. high and 53 ft. long, which commands the point of ingress and also a sunken-path to a subsidiary entrenchment on a lower level.



FIG. 15.—Promontory Fort, Bolt Tail.



FIG. 16.—Section of Vallum.



FIG. 17.—Section of Vallum and Outwork.

The secondary position crosses a minor promontory facing Bigbury Bay and the mouth of a stream which provided fresh water to the garrison. A rampart 9 ft. high and fosse 5 ft. deep commences on the low ground at the south-east and continues a straight course towards the fort above: at the north-west a small agger on the edge of the cliff is opposite the rampart, and here the exit emerges on the sunk path leading to the great camp. This smaller area is overlooked by the higher ground inland, but it provided a protected connection with the drinking supply and covered the landing place in the bay, until the defenders might possibly have to fall back on the stronghold above.

The position is admirably chosen, as the undulating ground would enhance the difficulty of a charge and expose the whole invading force to the missiles of the garrison.

Another type of this fort is seen in Embury Beacon (Fig. 18), on the north-west coast of Devon. Here a projection of the cliff is enclosed by a double entrenchment. The outer line consists of a vallum and fosse, the rampart is 3 ft. high and 15 ft. broad, with an escarpment 10 ft. in depth, and a fosse 8 ft. wide with a counterscarp of 3 ft. This is a strong work, but a yet more formidable defence is found at the northern end, where the entrance is situated. The way in lies between the inturned end of the vallum on one side overlapping the end of the vallum on the other side, while a sweeping, sickle-shaped vallum and fosse abuts on the curve of the first, and forms a sort of chamber. This outer agger is apparently a later addition to the first vallum; the opening through the entrenchments towards the south is modern. A portion of a broad mound is on the north, but the erosion of the cliff has reduced the works to an unknown extent.

The erosion is very apparent with the innermost entrenchment, which is reduced to a small arc of 200 ft.; but enough remains to show its character. The rampart rises 5 ft. from the interior, and is 12 ft. wide, with an escarpment of 10 ft. into a fosse 12 ft. wide.

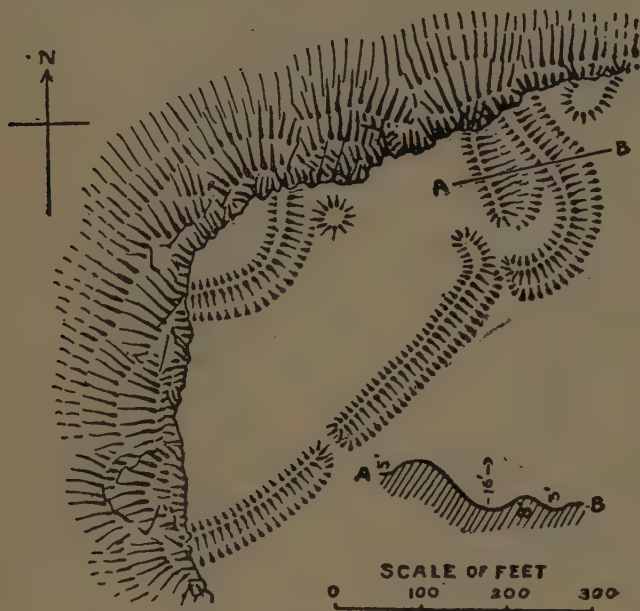


FIG. 18,—Embury Beacon.

A flat-topped mound against the last work is said to be a tumulus. If this is the case it is probably the grave of a chieftain, erected within the fort to recall his martial acts to the memory of a despairing garrison, that they might emulate his brave example. At the same time the mound provided a coign of vantage for a few brave defenders, and might have guarded the former entrance to the inner position, which has long since fallen with the cliff.

An inland stronghold of this class is seen in Markland Grips Camp, near the village of Cresswell, Derbyshire (Fig. 19). A tongue of high land is

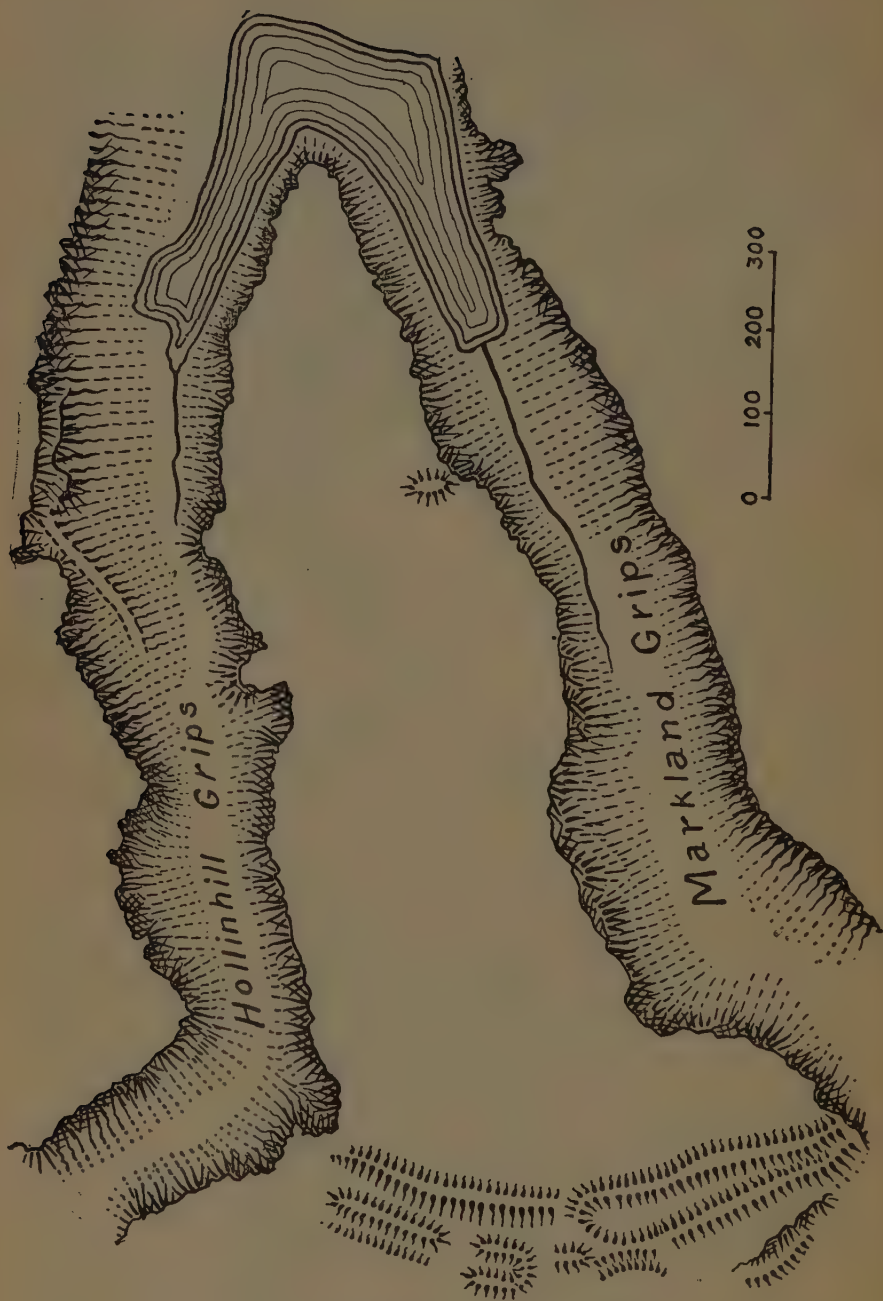


FIG. 19.—Markland Grips Camp.

situated between two ravines, or "grips," respectively known as Hollinhill Grip and Markland Grip, which converge eastwards until they unite and isolate the point of land. The ravines are quite precipitous, from 25 ft. to 40 ft. in depth, and from 150 ft. to 210 ft. wide, while the streams in the depths unite at the east in a small lake and together provide a formidable barrier.

The wedge of land—1,299 ft. long—is cut from the main mass of limestone on the west by entrenchments 600 ft. long, which have been somewhat reduced by the encroachment of a railway. The entrenchments consist of a triple vallum and fosse; the inner vallum of large stones and earth is 7 ft. high, and in places 24 ft. wide at the top, with a fosse 9 ft. deep and 15 ft. wide; but the other two lines have been mutilated. From the worked flints and flakes found at the rampart it would appear that a fierce battle was fought here by people of the Stone Age. A small agger, one-third of the whole distance from the point, is raised at the top of a *fault* in the cliff, to defend the weakness at that spot, where access up the height could more easily have been obtained.

Stockley Beck Camp, county Durham, is a similar fortified position, surrounded by two streams—except on the west—which unite at the eastern end, the site being utilised for the enclosure of deer and wild cattle by the Nevilles of the sixteenth century.

A simple example of a promontory fortress overlooking lowlands is on the eastern spur of hills near Okehampton, in Devonshire (Fig. 20). The base of the hill is surrounded on three sides by the East Okement River; but the strength of the position was in its great and sudden height rather than its watery base. The promontory is crossed by a vallum and fosse; the former rises 8 ft. above the camp and has an escarpment of 14 ft. into a fosse

6 ft. deep. The entrance is in the middle of the rampart, and on the edge of the rock is a portion

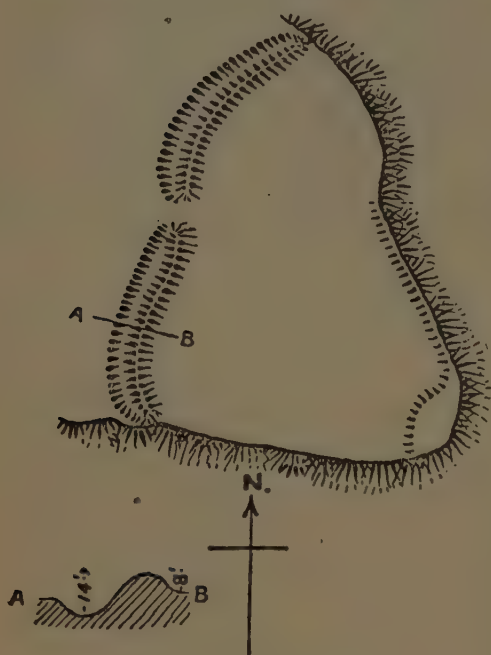


FIG. 20.—Okehampton.

of a breastwork, erected rather as a safeguard from the perilous precipice than for military defence, and at the extreme point is a flat mound 3 ft. high, where the chieftain possibly had his shelter of boughs.

Maiden Castle, Durham, also depended upon its height above the surrounding land; but on the west, whence the approach was made, the fosse is 80 ft.

beyond the rampart instead of its usual position immediately at its base.

To the east of Hathersage, Derbyshire, the "Carl's Wark" is a promontory fort rising almost perpendicularly above the swamps of Hathersage Moor. The artificial work across the isthmus is a great rampart 12 ft. high, with its outer face supported by a dry wall, having an entrance ingeniously contrived at its southern extremity.

A low-lying promontory formed by surrounding marshes is Pan Castle, Whitchurch, Shropshire. To include such in the classification may not meet with general approval; but, except for the lack of height, it possesses all the necessary essentials.

CLASS B (I).

*Fortresses on Hill-tops with Artificial Defences,
following the natural line of the hill.*

All primitive peoples sought high ground for war-like contests, from which they could look down upon their adversaries, and therefrom fling their missiles with better aim and more far-reaching results; at the same time increase the difficulties of an assault.

The first mention of the pre-historic fortresses in this island is by Cæsar, who, with his limited experience of the country, tells us that the Britons had secured a place admirably fortified by nature and by art; all the entrances to it being closed by a great number of felled trees. He describes how they rushed out of the woods to fight here and there, and prevented the Romans from entering their fortifications;¹ a system of warfare again commented upon in a later chapter.²

Tacitus also describes how the Icenian Britons, in their resistance to Publius Ostorius, selected as a position for battle, a place fenced in by a rude rampart, with a narrow approach, so that it might be impassable by the horse.³ Caradoc (generally Latinised into Caractacus) also, when attacked by

¹ *De Bell. Gall.*, V, ix.

² *Ibid.*, V, xix.

³ *Annals*, XII, 31.

the Romans, took up a position upon the ridges of some lofty mountains, and where the sides were gently inclining and approachable, he piled up stones for a rampart: his position was also skirted by a river dangerous to be forded.¹

These are very meagre descriptions, but so far as it has been possible by exploration to determine the period in which the great hill-forts were constructed, archæology has confirmed the words of the classical authors, and the ramparted hill-tops may be received as representing British strongholds. Although Tacitus, writing from the dictates of his father-in-law, Agricola, describes the ramparts as rude, many of the works—despite the lapse of eighteen and a-half centuries since he wrote—still show great skill in design and excellence of workmanship.

The deep and wide fosses surrounding the summits, and following all the irregularities of the sides of the hills, not only presented obstacles to the besieger, but provided sunken roads whereby the besieged could pass from one line of defence to another covered from the missiles of the enemy. Paths are usually found by which access to one could be gained from another, for the carrying of weapons to the defenders, or through which the wounded might be borne from the fighting line.

Upon the top of the counterscarp, or outer edge of the fosse, a bank is frequently found, a feature contradicting modern ideas of military entrenching, but evidently considered necessary in ancient warfare.

The general absence of water within the fortifications leads to the conclusion that these hill-forts were not for permanent habitation, but as a place of refuge during a time of hostility for the people of that neighbourhood in which it was situated.

¹ Tacitus, *Annals*, XII, 33.

Occasionally springs are found within the ramparts ; sometimes clay-lined hollows may have been for water storage, as seen in Sidbury Castle, near Sidmouth ; but more often a narrow path leads from the camp, down a precipitous hill-side, to a river near its base, such as remains at Chesterton Walls, Salop, and in many other examples. A good instance of a defended well is seen at Woodbury Castle, Devon (Fig. 24, p. 44), where a succession of aggers guard the path to a spring which is dominated by a rampart.

In this section the difficulty is not the lack of examples, but the choice of a few characteristic types from the great number at our command. All of them have probably been the scene of daring deeds, but in a time when no written chronicles were kept, it is an almost impossible task to fix any definite history to individual fortifications.

The name of Caradoc, the intrepid chieftain who bravely withstood the Roman arms until the discipline of the Empire prevailed, is associated with many ancient fortifications : Old Sarum, where the entrenchments were supplemented by others of later date ; in Shropshire ; and in Wales. *Caer Caradoc*—the fort of Caradoc—three miles south by east from Clun, in Shropshire, 670 ft. above the River Redlake, was considered by Camden and others to answer the description given by Tacitus of the final struggle of that warrior. He tells us how Caradoc chose a place against which it was difficult to advance, and from which it was as difficult to retreat. It was on the ridges of some lofty mountains, upon which he made a rampart, and his position was also skirted by a river dangerous to ford.¹ “This display of courage and alacrity amazed the Roman general ;

¹ *Annals*, XII, 33.

besides the river to be passed was the rampart they had raised, and the frowning ridges of the mountains; every part exhibiting symptoms of fierce determination, and every post well manned; all these things alarmed him." "The prefects and tribunes inflamed the ardour of the army, and Ostorius, seizing the auspicious moment, led them on thus excited, and without much difficulty cleared the river. When he approached the bulwark and while the conflict was carried on by means of missiles, there were more of our men wounded and many began to fall; but after they had formed themselves into a military shell, they demolished the rude and shapeless structure of stones, and encountered hand to hand equally. The barbarians betook themselves to the ridges of the mountains, and thither also our soldiers forced their way, both the light and heavy armed, the former assailing them with darts, the latter fighting foot to foot. The ranks of the Britons, on the other hand, were broken, as they had no covering, or breastplates, or helmets, and if they resisted the auxiliaries they were slaughtered by the swords and javelins of the heavy-armed. Glorious was the victory gained that day! The wife and daughter of Caradoc were taken prisoners; his brothers also surrendered at discretion."¹

Another fort retaining this chieftain's name is in the same county, near Church Stretton (Fig. 21), where a rocky ridge has the highest part—1,000 ft. above the valley—entrenched, the area of the enclosed camp being about six acres.

So irregular is the rock upon which the fort is placed that portions protruding above the general surface have been used as supports to the lengths of rampart constructed between them.

¹ Tacitus, XII, 35.

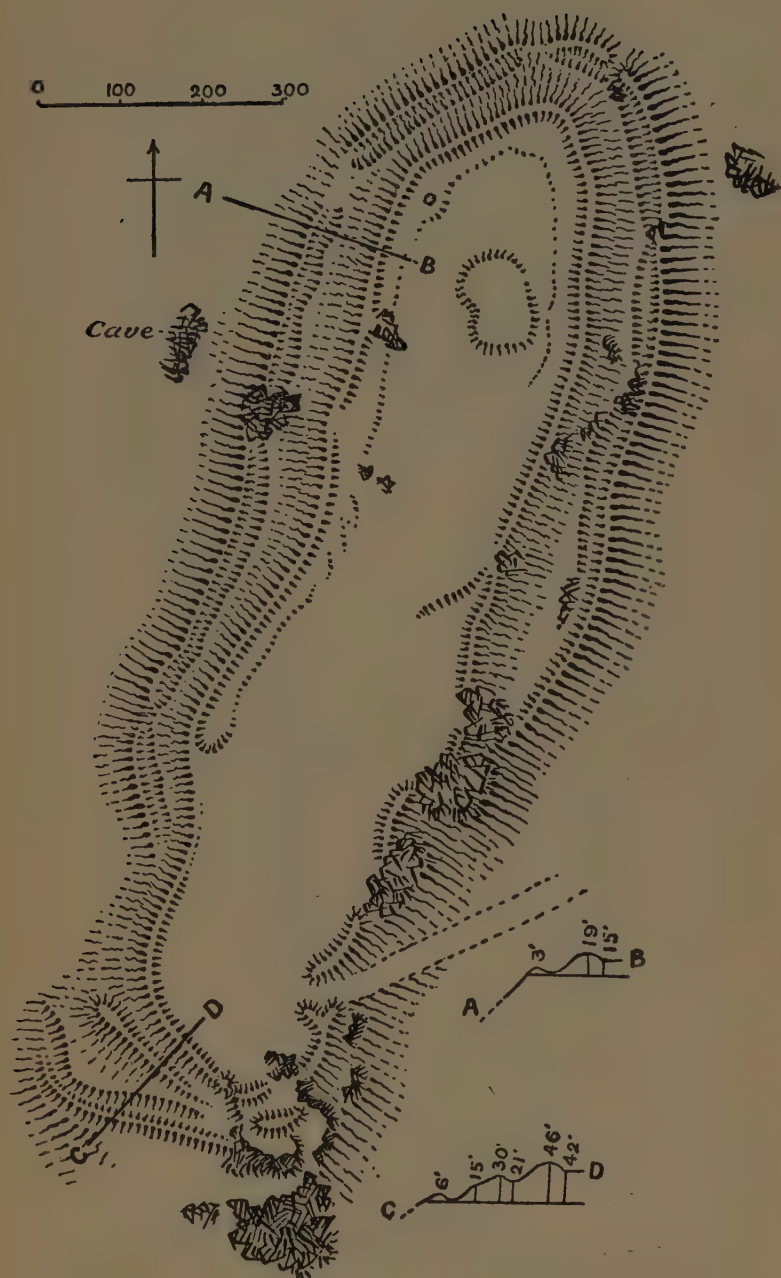


FIG. 21.—Caer Caradoc, Church Stretton.

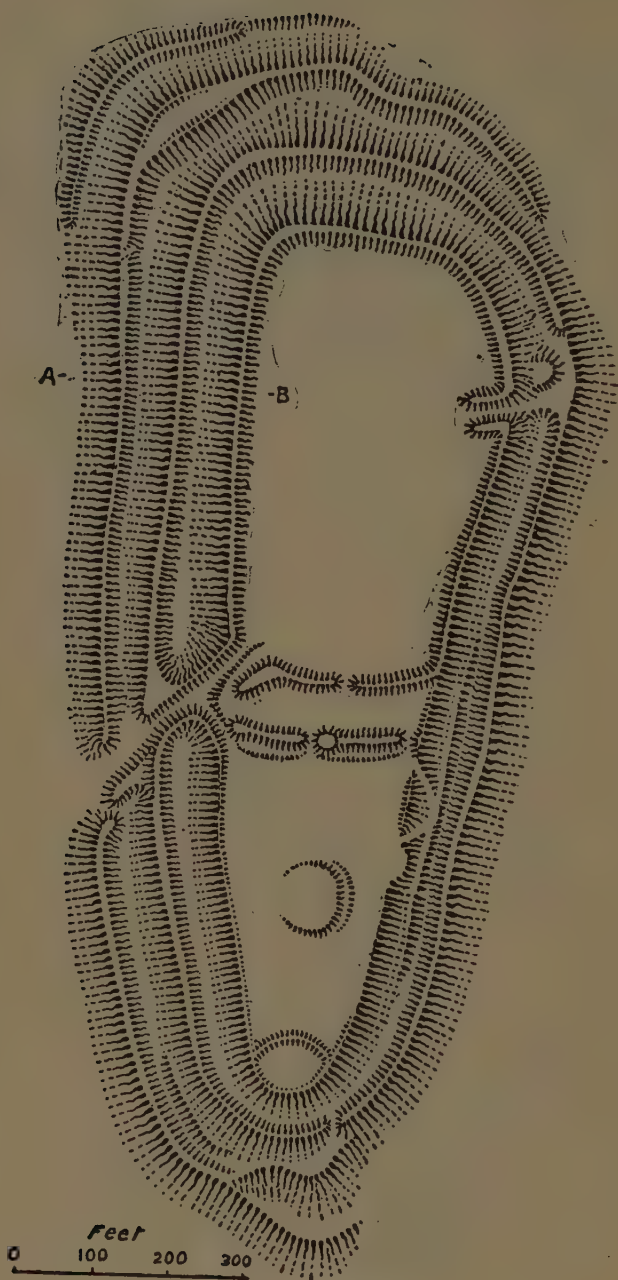


FIG. 22.—Hembury.

The entrance, approached by a path up a steep slope, is between a curved and a forked agger, whilst the path is commanded by the works above. The greater part of the fort is protected by a double vallum; within the higher of the two a level path is excavated in the rock, providing a good footing for the defenders. At the southern extremity a flat rock provides a strong position and supports two aggers, and on the slope beneath are certain outworks.

One of the most interesting examples is Hembury Fort, near Honiton (Fig. 22), a marvellous exhibition of skill and energy. The vastness of those huge earthen walls, and the strategic arrangement, must be seen to be appreciated.

Crowning a bold spur of great height, the area of the camp—somewhat egg-shaped in plan—is 1,085 ft. long and 330 ft. at its widest. On the east side is a double vallum, otherwise it is triple, and at the north-west corner, where greater danger was anticipated, is a fourth vallum.

The rampart rises from within from 4 ft. to 10 ft. in height (Fig. 23); the first escarpment is 40 ft. deep, the second 24 ft., and the third some 30 ft., when it is incorporated with the hill-side. The main entrance, on the west, is by an oblique path between these three valla and two fosses. An agger on the right hand protects the opening into the fosse, and the upper fosse on either side is entirely closed by the vallum which, on the left, provides a wide platform. As the path reaches the interior it is divided into two ways by a triangular mound; that to the left is the broader, evidently for the passage of chariots and cattle, and enters the larger division of the camp. The triangular

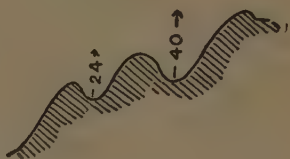


FIG. 23.—Section of works, Hembury.

mound is surmounted by the curved and widened ends of two lateral ramparts; thus the entrance is covered by a succession of positions.

The two traverses, pierced by an oblique path, enclose an ample space for a large body of troops for this, the most necessary position, dominating the entrance and each of the two divisions of the stronghold. The smaller division, for the foot soldiers, contains a circular platform 3 ft. high with the remains of a shallow ditch around it; this was probably the site of the chieftain's hut. At the southern extremity is another enclosure for a guard, and probably the spot on which beacon fires were lighted; beneath this a sunken path communicates with the two fosses, and opens upon a platform, while a subsidiary earthwork occupies the broadened hollow of the fosse at the south-west.

From this area for foot soldiers two paths, curving into one at the base, give access to a berme, or platform, 11 ft. beneath the rampart and 18 ft. above the base of the fosse; and a small mound protrudes from the rampart at the top of the southernmost of these paths to govern the situation.

From the western side of the larger, northern, division of the camp is a road to the fosse; this is protected by two incurved aggers above and a semi-circular mound below.

The north-western corner—more easily assailable by reason of the land being less precipitous—has four huge ramparts; these rise to a greater height than at other parts of the circumvallation, and the third vallum widens into a broad platform at the angle, surrounded by its own rampart.

Honiton, the supposed site of the Roman station of MORIDUNUM, was placed—according to custom—within striking distance of the British fortress; and

while Roman coins and a small statuette of a household god have been found within the lines of Hembury, it is not a Roman camp, as is frequently supposed. After the conquest it was an easy matter for any Roman articles to be conveyed within the hill fort, but for relics of the warriors who manned those walls in a hopeless cause, we may look to the looped palstave and bronze blades which have been found in the vicinity.

Woodbury Castle, Devon (Fig. 24), has an eccentric plan, governed by the formation of the hill, although the latter is of no very acute ascent. Two-thirds of this fort—the south-eastern part—are almost surrounded by a double vallum and fosse of great strength, the escarpment into the fosse being 23 ft. deep. At the north-west three bold ramparts with their two fosses are curved to the brow of the hill, and are indeed formidable. The innermost rampart rises 7 ft. and has an escarpment of 45 ft. on the slope; the counterscarp is 16 ft. This deep fosse is followed by a second rampart with a scarp of 18 ft. and a counterscarp of 7 ft., while the outermost vallum is 15 ft. in height. At the western entrance the crescent-shaped rampart abuts at right angles upon the side of the southern, and two outlying aggers protect the access to the interior. The northern entrance is commanded by an extension of the outer vallum and fosse; an outwork is drawn across this gateway, which, with other works, defends a way down to a well and secures safe access to a supply of water. Other supplementary works, now mutilated, lie on the south of the fort. An ancient road along the ridge of the hill passes through the earthworks.

Space will not allow us to dwell in such detail upon other examples of these forts as in Hembury.

The plans must become eloquent in their own de-

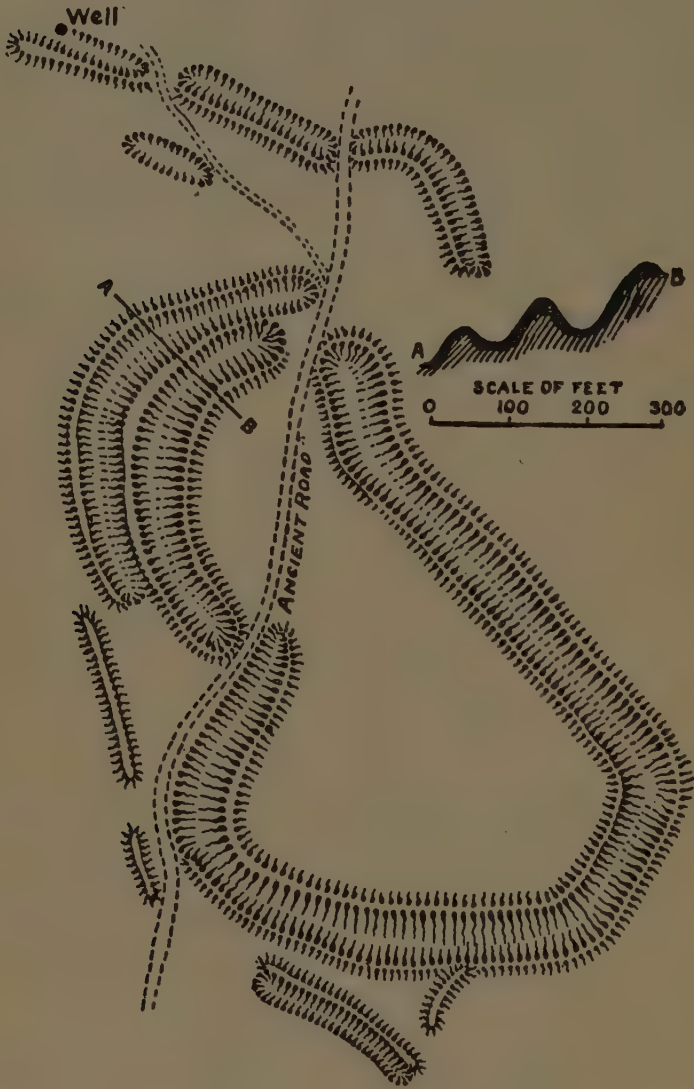


FIG. 24.—Woodbury Castle, Devon.

scriptions, and the letterpress may only draw attention to certain special features.

The Wrekin, in Shropshire (Fig. 25), is an isolated



FIG. 25.—The Wrekin.

hill of great steepness, a long narrow ridge of rock (from the Anglo-Saxon *Ryken*, a ridge), which is a conspicuous feature of the county; and from its shape locally termed "The Whale." The whole of the ridge is easily defensible, but as it approaches its highest altitude from the north-east a sunken path—now almost worn flat by the feet of excursionists—gives access through an inturned rampart to a camp; but above it, on the apex of the rock, is another and stronger fortification. The whole is inclosed by double and triple defences, which are now little more than terraces at various heights of the hill-side. At the south-west entrance two guard-chambers are constructed within the fosse, and a series of aggers strengthen the almost inaccessible approach. At the south side a path leads to a pinnacle of rock which has been brought into the scheme of defence, presenting a coign of great advantage. Within each of the camps is a water-basin, and in the south-western enclosure is a tumulus, also three hut-circles.

Maiden Castle, Dorsetshire, is the largest of all the hill forts of England, two miles from the spot on which the Romans encamped during its subjugation, which afterwards grew into the important station of DURNOVARIA, or Dorchester.

The entrenchments surround an imposing hill, and, as in all the examples of this Class, following its irregularities; it happens that two contractions inwards, in the northern and southern sides respectively, occur exactly opposite each other, and a scarp, passing from one towards the other, has been taken by many antiquaries as proof that the smaller eastern area alone formed the earliest stronghold. When, however, we consider the use of traverses, partly natural or wholly artificial, as dealt with in a former



Maiden Castle, Dorchester.

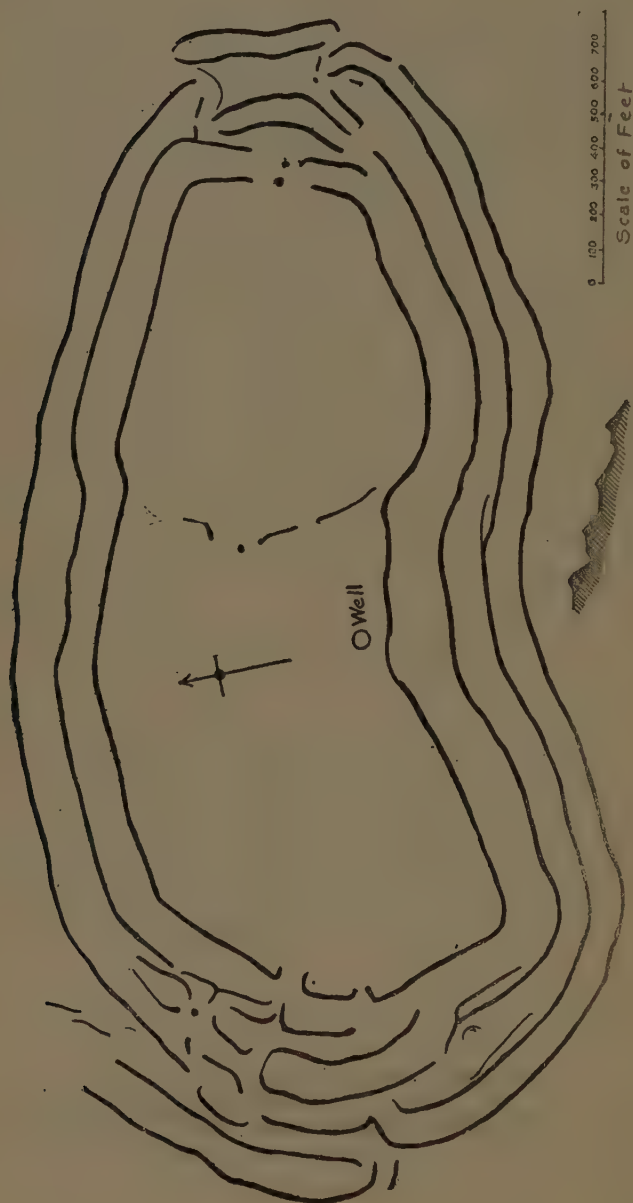
paragraph (page 23), such theories appear entirely empirical, and this was evidently a great double camp after the plan of the Wrekin (Fig. 25, p. 45), and Pontesford Camp.

This immense stronghold covers 115 acres of ground, and some of its ramparts are 62 ft. in height. It is generally surrounded by a triple val-
lum, in places increased to four, and provided with broad platforms; at the two ends of its longer axis are elaborately involved entrances, the western entrance is shown in detail in Fig. 7, p. 17. The general lines only of the circumvallation, or surrounding earthen walls, can be given on a small page, and the black lines of the plan (Fig. 26) represent the ramparts and aggers. The angles of the escarpments of the northern ramparts are very acute, while those on the southern side are more gradual; but the latter side presents more interesting features. Within the two intermediate ramparts are broad platforms capable of accommodating a great host of warriors, slingers, and javelin throwers; these platforms towards the western end of the southern side are represented here (see Plate). A water-hole has been discovered in the western enclosure, and many indications of habitations have been found; sling-stones and pottery were dug from pits of black earth; traces of hut-circles marked the interior area; but, although now under grass, former ploughing of the surface obliterated nearly all signs of the life that once animated this ancient stronghold.

Blocks of Ridgeway stone, discovered in various parts, led some antiquaries to conclude that the inner rampart was once crested with a stone breastwork.

An exceedingly strong fortress, in which have been found many eloquent witnesses to cruel warfare of a prehistoric period, is situated on the Worle Hill

above Weston-super-Mare, overlooking the Bristol Channel.



Section at South-West

FIG. 26.—Maiden Castle, Dorset.

The crest of the hill is crowned by a long, narrow, and irregular fort of great strength. The ground is precipitous on all sides but the eastern, and here the double line of entrenchments of the southern side are increased to seven for the protection of the most vulnerable part. The ramparts are of piled stones, of huge proportions, while earthen defences are found at a lower grade of the hill-side.

The interior area is divided towards the east by a traverse, and beyond the eastern ramparts are enclosures for cattle. Numerous triangular platforms, formerly existing between and without the lines of the camp, were supposed to have been for slingers, protecting certain vital points such as the entrances and the approach to the well.

Within the fort are a great number of hut circles, from which may be read the story of numerous inhabitants, with an amply supply of provisions, being slain by a conquering host and their roofs destroyed by fire. Not only were the implements of warfare discovered—sling-stones, flint arrow-heads, iron spear-heads, javelins, and a dagger—but the death wounds of the warriors were exposed. Among the skeletons were seen deep sword cuts in the skulls and thigh-bones. The vertebra of one retained the fatal iron spike of a javelin, and a large stone, hurled with great force, was embedded in the fractured skull of another.

Seldom have such vivid traces of the use of the hill forts of Britain been found as in Worlebury Camp, where these remains open the pages of a history so clearly written to a certain point, leaving it doubtful whether the final rout was by the Romans or Saxons, though from various relics the inference is that the latter people were the conquerors.

CLASS B (2).

Fortresses, usually on High Ground, but less dependent on natural slopes for protection.

The fortresses of this Class are not controlled in plan by the formation of the hill, and are therefore more symmetrical in outline; while often exhibiting curiously designed entrances, the special features are

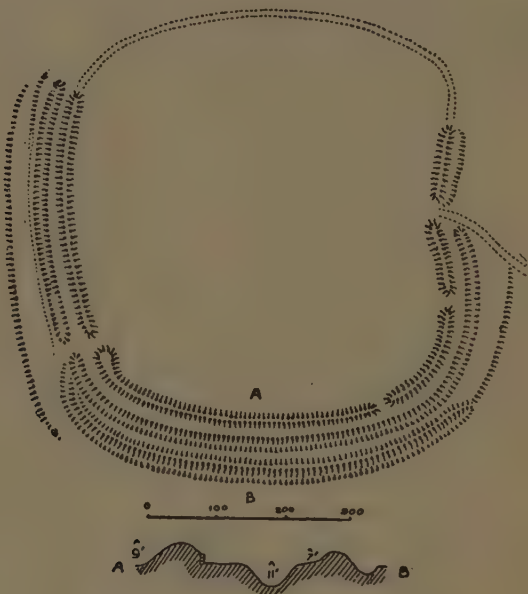


FIG. 27.—Cranbrook Castle.

less numerous, and fewer examples are required for explanation than in the previous division.

In tracing the lines of this type of defence care must be taken to discriminate between the worn entrenchments and the artificial terracing of a hill-side whereon are preserved vestiges of early hill culture.

An exceedingly good type may be found in Cranbrook Castle, Devonshire (Fig. 27), which is interesting, not only in its defences but as an unfinished work.

Broadly speaking, it is square in plan with rounded corners. The approach from the south is a gentle upward slope, the eastern and western ascent is steeper, but the northern side is above a precipitous descent to the River Teign.

Easy of assault on the south, that side is most strongly defended; here are a double vallum and double fosse, an inner and outer berme on either side of the inner fosse, and another rampart. The rampart rises 9 ft. from the area of the camp, it is 21 ft. thick, and has been supported by dry walling on the outside to above half its height. Outside this is a berme, or platform, about 20 ft. wide, then a fosse 11 ft. deep, and beyond, another platform varying from 6 ft. to 16 ft. wide protected by a rampart 7 ft. high, and an outer fosse.

The principal entrance is at the south-west, attained by ascending a broad terrace which extends along the western side, and protected by an incurved and broadened end to the rampart.

The defences of the two sides are of less strength; and on the north we see the unfinished work of the early engineers, apparently of the Neolithic Age, who had gathered and brought stones to this spot, piling them along the line of the contemplated rampart to form the rubble core of an earthen wall; but the

earth which would have been thrown over the stones in the digging of the fosse was never worked; and it remained unfinished, possibly because the need of it above the steep bank of the river was not of vital import, or perhaps its position was not strategically so good for commanding the river as the fortresses of Wooston and Prestonbury on the neighbouring heights. These three forts form a triangle, Prestonbury, on the northern cliff of the Teign, is overlooked by Cranbrook on the southern bank; and while Wooston is on the latter side it is so situated above a curve in the river as to command a long reach of its waters.

Holne Chase Castle—illustrated in Fig. 13, p. 22, to explain a defended entrance—is an example of this class, standing 200 ft. above the River Dart, the precipitous sides of which assist in its defence.

Norton Camp (Fig. 28), one mile from the village of Craven Arms, in Shropshire, although on a hill 500 ft. above its surroundings, does not follow its contour. It was approached by a sunken road winding up the hill-side, and its entrances defended by obliquely arranged and broadened ends of the ramparts. It is surrounded by a double vallum—the inner one, at its highest point being 21 ft. and the outer 12 ft.—except on the north-west, where the precipitous side of the hill was crowned by a 6 ft. rampart. At the spot on the south-west where the double rampart abruptly ends on the verge of the hill, the defensive walls are increased to four, to dominate a vulnerable point.

Within the north-western rampart the author found the remains of seven hut-circles, the bases of bee-hive huts, the flat stones of some of the walls still standing to a height of 2 ft. beneath a dense tangle of undergrowth.

Blackbury Castle, near Seaton, South Devon (Fig. 29), has already been mentioned as having a noteworthy entrance. It is an oval camp, on high

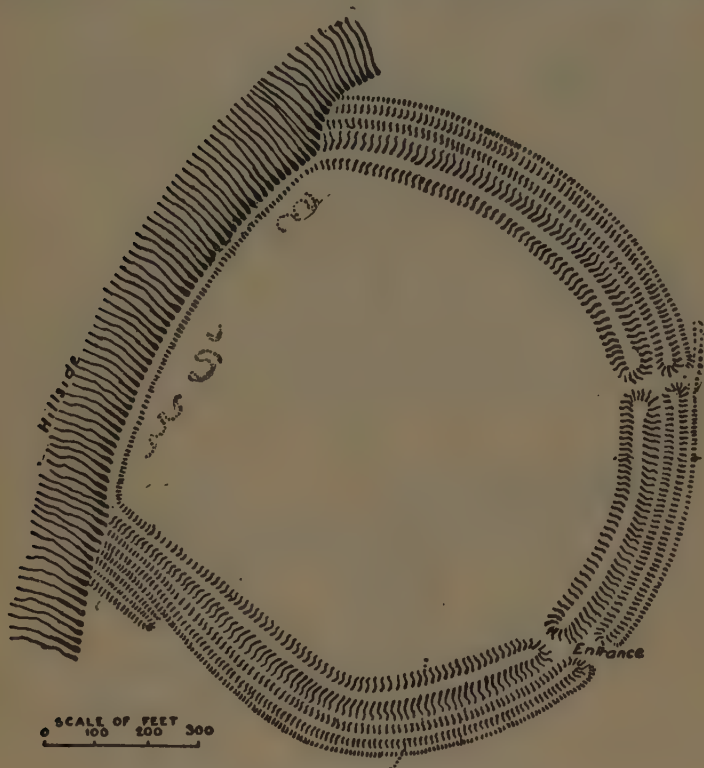


FIG. 28.—Norton Camp, Culmington.

ground, surrounded by a bold vallum and fosse. The remarkable entrance is formed by the outturning of the rampart, embracing its own fosse by a second curve on either side. A path here passes to the right and left, and by its side another vallum 8 ft. high immediately starts to edge each side of a road to a distance of 230 ft., at their southern extremities rising high above the ground level and 20 ft. above its fosse. The fosse to each of these aggers is on the side farthest from the road.

From the extreme end of this road the ramparts—with outer fosses—are deflected back at an angle of 40 degrees until they rejoin the main defences,

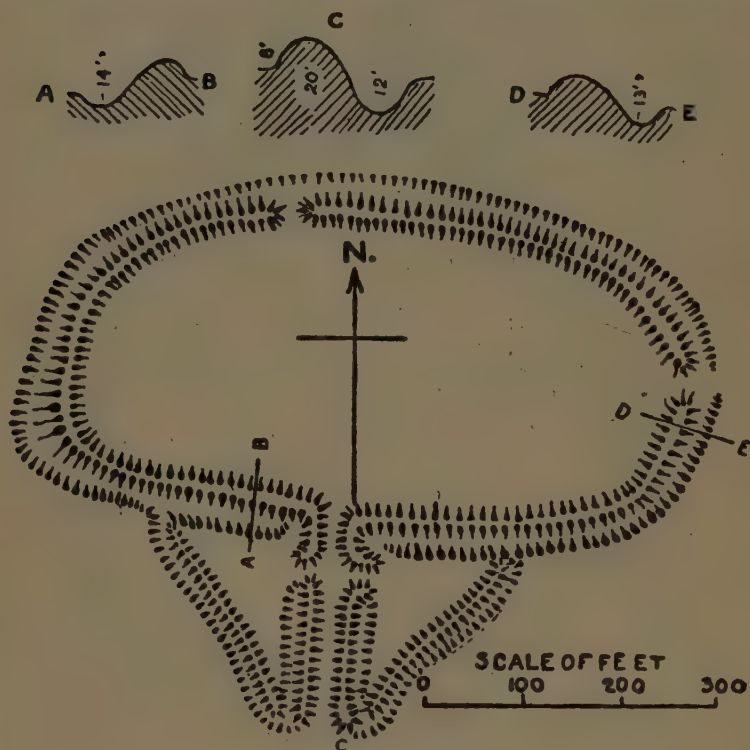


FIG. 29.—Blackbury Castle, Devon.

thus enclosing two triangular areas, capable of holding a large body of warriors to dispute the entrance of an enemy.

In addition to these forts, enclosures of smaller size—in principle—adhere to the requirements of this Class; being situated on hills and high positions, they avoid the more lowly placed, which conform to Class C. Such are many little ramparted areas perched upon almost inaccessible crags or the edges

of cliffs, and their sole use was apparently to serve as posts of communication between great fortresses, or as signalling stations to warn the garrisons of strongholds of the approach of an enemy.

To mention a few examples, there are among the hills of Shropshire various spots, as the Vron, Garn Bank, and the Knuck, commanding views of rivers and valleys and in sight of hill fortresses, whilst the positions of those forts precluded such oversight of the lowlands and waterways; thus the watch at these spots, too weak in numbers to withstand a foe, could give the necessary warning to their troops. Others, like "The Beacon" on the edge of the northern cliffs of Devonshire, could warn the countryside of a tribal raid, or the appearance of the Norse pirates of a later age.

CLASS C.

*Rectangular or other Simple Enclosures, including
Forts and Towns of the Romano-British period.*

Simple enclosures of a rampart only or of a rampart and fosse were apparently common to all the early periods of earthworks; the wording of the heading to this chapter, however, is specially directed to Roman camps, but the latter part of it embraces too wide a field for our present purpose, as the towns of the Romano-British period survive only in the stone successors of the earthen walls.

This is the most opportune place to notice the Roman system of encampment, and the chief authorities on whom we rely to assist in the identification of the sites fortified by that people in England.

Polybius, a Greek historian and a general of the Achæans, B.C. 206—124, defined the highly scientific system of camps and entrenchments used in the course of building up the Roman Empire.

Frontinus and Hyginus were two military engineers of the early half of the first century, whose writings are more to our purpose, as they were contemporary with the earlier project of conquering Britain and the invasion by Aulus Plautius and Cneius Sentius. Vegetius, who lived in the fourth century, wrote a treatise, *De Re Militari*, which he dedicated to the Emperor Valentinian II.

In the days of the first writer the scientific system of entrenchment was at its height, which, for various reasons—among others the absorption of the conquered races into the army and the greater elasticity allowed—afterwards lost many of its distinctive features.

Contrary to the British, who trusted to inaccessible positions, the Romans relied on discipline, and accompanied by baggage and other impedimenta, preferred the lower ground.

Livy says the Roman armies never passed a night without pitching a camp and fortifying it with a rampart and fosse, which had been marked out by an advanced party with *vexillæ*, or small flags.

For a description of such a work we may well quote the words of Dr. Rutherford, who thus sums up the various authorities:—"A Roman army never halted for the night without entrenching itself. Towards the end of a day's march a detachment was sent on in front to select a spot for encampment. A favourite site was the slope of a hill, especially if wood, water, and grass, were abundant in its neighbourhood. The lines were marked out with such accuracy that on the arrival of the troops not only they began the entrenchments without delay, but each man knew exactly where he was quartered for the night.

The camp lay four square, and each side was pierced by a gateway. From the *Porta Prætoria* to the *Porta Decumana* there ran a road fifty feet broad, dividing the camp lengthwise into two equal parts. The gates on the right and left of the camp were joined by another and broader road, called *Via Principalis*, which divided the camp into two unequal parts, one-third and two-thirds respectively. The larger part was assigned to the legionaries, and

was itself cut in two by the *Via Quintana*; the other contained the *Prætorium* or general's quarters, and the quarters of the *legati*, *quæstores*, and *tribuni*. The picked troops were also stationed here. As a rule this was the side nearest the enemy, the *Porta*

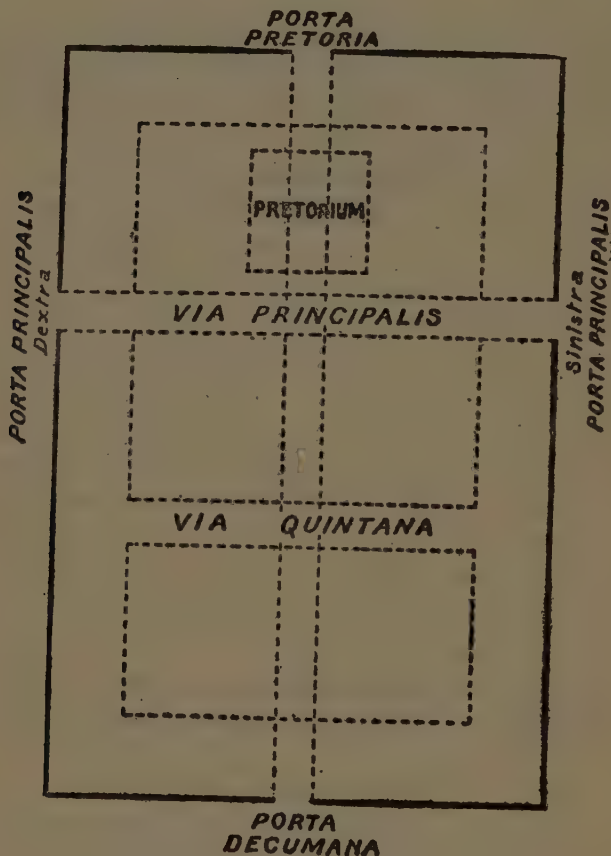


FIG. 30.—Plan of a Roman Camp.

Decumana being furthest removed and on the highest ground. Between the rampart and the tents a space of 200 ft. was always left unoccupied. By this means the enemy was prevented from firing the tents, and

room was left for the deploying of the troops. The rampart was called *vallum* or *agger*, and was formed by the earth flung out of the trench (*fossa*). The stakes (*valli*) carried by the soldiers were used to form a sort of breastwork or *chevaux-de-frise* on the top. The trench was ordinarily 12 ft. broad by 9 ft. deep."

How precise was the system is seen from Tacitus, who describes the finding of the camp of Varus in the Teutoburgium forest—"The extent of ground and the measurements of the principia, left no doubt that the whole was the work of three legions."¹

Polybius says that the oblong plan was preferred, and from the works of Frontinus and Hyginus we know that it was 2,320 ft. long by 1,620 ft. wide, with the angles slightly rounded. This included the vallum and fosse, and covered about 86 acres; but in later ages we are told by Vegetius that a circular, or other form adapted to the contours of the ground, was used, which will account for the scarcity of small camps of rectangular plan remaining in England.

North-east of Bristol a very perfect example of an oblong camp with a double line of ramparts remains at Little Sodbury. At Ratby, five miles from Leicester, Bury Camp (Fig. 31) is surrounded by a single vallum and fosse, covering 9 acres; on the north side—where the works are well preserved—the rampart rises 3 ft. from the interior, and has an obtuse escarpment of 38 ft. into a fosse with a counterscarp of 9 ft. There are a number of gaps through the defences, but some of these are caused by mutilation and are modern; four only appear to be ancient entrances—at the north, the west, the south 250 ft. from the eastern corner, and at the north-eastern angle; within the latter is a small platform

¹ *Annals*, B. I, c. 61.

which may have been the Prætorium. If that is the case, it was a departure from the military arrangements of the earlier Latins.

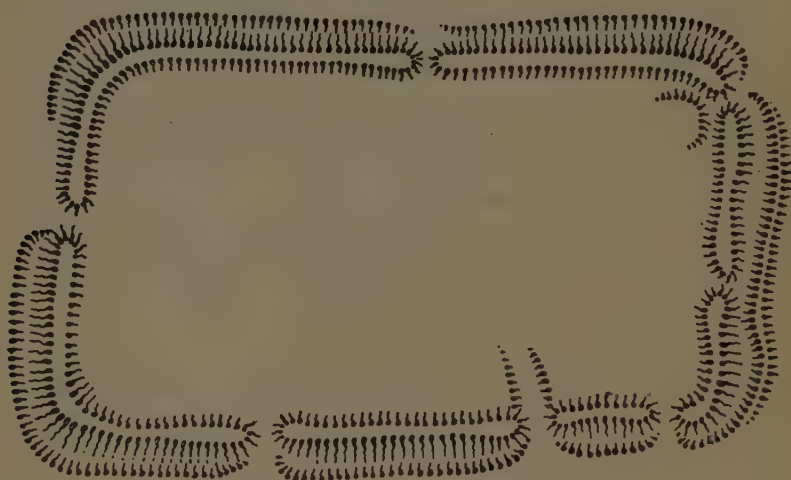


FIG. 31.—Bury Camp, Ratby, Leicestershire.

A common feature in Roman camps is their bisection by a road. Thus at the station of MAUDNESSEDUM, in Leicestershire, the Watling Street divides the works into two equal halves on the line of its longer axis. The station of CAUSENNÆ may be traced within the town of Ancaster, with the Ermine Street passing through it. Woodbury Castle (Fig. 24, p. 44), beyond the eastern bank of the estuary of the River Exe, in Devonshire, has been numbered amongst the Roman works by various writers, partially because it is traversed by an ancient road; but whilst it was probably occupied by the troops of the Empire, it is certainly of pre-Roman origin, and the British trackway passing through its western side no doubt formed the base of the later Roman road. The protected well on the north of this stronghold is a feature.

Vegetius gives careful instructions for supplying camps with water, and should the source be outside the fortifications, he directs the erection of forts for its safeguarding, a precaution observable at Wolstanbury, in Sussex.

A camp constructed on the less rigid principles of Vegetius may be seen at Nordy Bank, Shropshire; it is of irregular elliptical plan, occupying a steep hill within striking distance of the two hill forts of Abdon Burf and Clee Burf on the Brown Clee Hill. It is surrounded by a single vallum and fosse, the former 12 ft. in height and the latter 6 ft. in depth, with lines of entrenchments sweeping up the hill in a curve to the north-east entrance.

The general position of the smaller Roman camps has led to their wholesale destruction, the gently undulating ground easily irrigated by the waters of adjacent rivers was coveted for the plough; while—through cultivation—untold numbers of these works have been utterly obliterated, there remain many sites around which the lines of the ancient ramparts are just discernible. This is the case at Burg, near Woodbridge, and at Brettenham, both in Suffolk. The ramparts are ploughed into the fosses, the latter are abnormally widened and all but levelled, but yet may be traced, and over the area fragments of Roman pottery speak of a life far behind us, while numerous oyster shells reveal the epicureanism of those who, for a time, were Britain's masters.

The permanent camps of the Romans became stations, or "towns of the Romano-British period," as the Earthworks Committee have worded the heading adopted in this chapter. On many of these sites, as Chester, Caerleon, Leicester, and others, the original features may yet be traced, although the first earthen walls have been obliterated by later

Roman masonry, which in turn have been adapted or superseded by mediæval walls; and despite the centuries of rebuilding of dwellings within those walls the plan of the roads through the original camps is largely preserved. Thus the old circumvallation of Leicester—the ancient RATÆ—may still be followed in the midst of the present widely-spread town, intersected by two roads crossing nearly at right angles, which represent the ways in the ancient camp. In the plan of Roman Leicester (Fig. 32) those streets only are marked which show



FIG. 32.—Roman Leicester.

the ancient boundaries, the western wall—by the river—is conjectural, but there is now little doubt

that a wall formerly existed, and that the Romans did not depend solely on the protection of the river. A comparison of this plan with Fig. 30, p. 58, will at once demonstrate how the larger forts were planned on the military system set forth by the Roman engineers. The Saxon "mount" thrown up by Ethelfleda is seen outside the line of the ancient vallum of Leicester.

Within this Class fall numerous circular camps of small dimensions, frequently situated by the side of ancient roads and near to a large camp, possibly constructed to protect an outpost or scouting party; others in high positions were presumably signalling stations, and others placed along a boundary line—as Offa's Dyke—were evidently for the observation, or policeing, of the frontier; all of them too weak to withstand an armed assault of any strength.

Some enclosures of circular or other simple plan appear to have served for pastoral purposes, small enough to surround the shepherds and their families, or large enough to fold the cattle; for in those days wolves were a constant source of danger to the flocks.

Farway Castle, on Broad Down, Devon (Fig. 33), is a circular work, 200 ft. in diameter, surrounded by a low rampart and shallow fosse. It is of the Bronze Age.

Rockhill Castle, near the side of the road, one and a-half miles from Clun, is another of the same plan; here the rampart now rises 1 ft. from the interior, with a scarp of 5 ft. into a fosse 2 ft. deep.

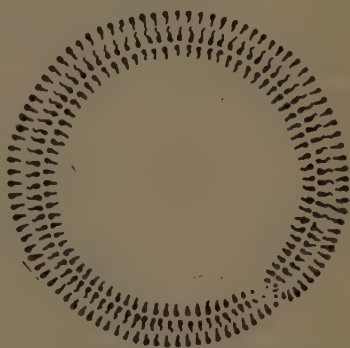


FIG. 33.—Farway Castle.

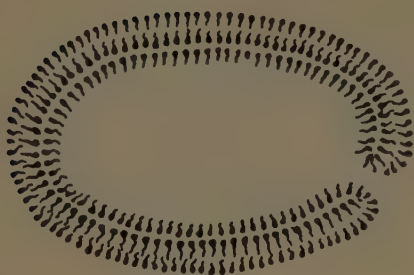


FIG. 34.—Camp at Stanborough.

Stanborough Camp, Halwell (Fig. 34), south of Totnes, is of oval plan, the rampart rising 10 ft. from the interior, with a scarp of 14 ft. into a fosse 5 ft. deep.

Leicestershire (Fig. 35), is an irregular oblong enclosure

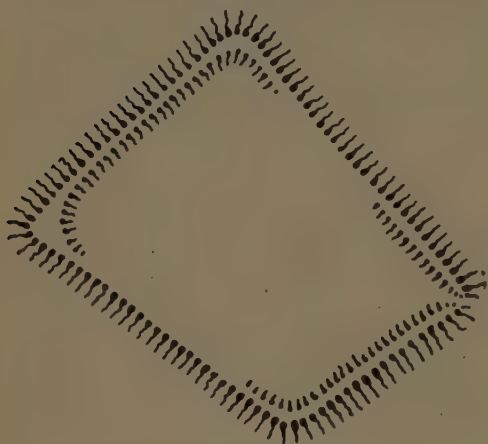


FIG. 35.—Camp at Hallaton.

Near Castle Hill Camp, at Hallaton, 300 ft. by 220 ft., with a rampart only, this rises 2 ft. from the interior—where it is not destroyed—and has an escarpment of 5 ft. 6 in.

There are examples of innumerable camps of similar types remaining all over the country,

though continuously being reduced by the plough and other agencies.

One other example, at Shoebury, is given in this Class; although the size of the work and its evident purpose might raise it above the category of "Simple Enclosures," it does not find provision for its acceptance in any other division of this Work.

The Danes were adepts at cutting deep and long trenches. The *Saxon Chronicle* records how, in 1016, they brought their ships to Greenwich at Rogation

Days. "And within a little space they went to London and they dug a great ditch on the south side, and dragged their ships to the west side of the bridge; and then afterwards they ditched the city

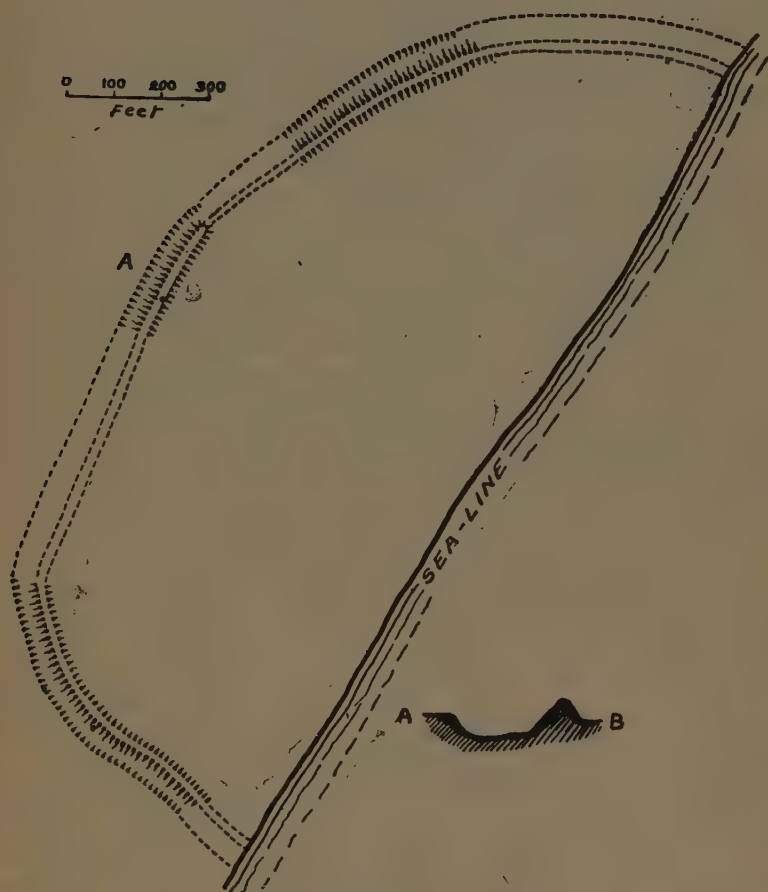


FIG. 36.—Works at Shoebury.

around, so that no one could go either in or out." This *great ditch* cut through the land on which Southwark now stands, and from which its present name *South-work* probably originated, involved

infinite labour; but the cutting of a channel for their ships was no uncommon thing for those hardy warrior-sailors. Their work at Shoebury was made the chief refuge for themselves and their ships, from which they raided other parts of England. Only a fragment of this stronghold remains; the sea has presumably carried away half of it, and the remainder is sadly mutilated. The plan on previous page (Fig. 36) represents its condition before 1885, and its position may still be partly traced in the present "Rampart Street." The vallum around this crescent plan rose 12 ft. in height, and a scarp of nearly 24 ft. descended into a fosse 40 ft. wide and about 12 ft. in depth. The great width of the fosse, once open to the sea, is supposed to have provided a dock into which the galleys flying the dreaded standard of the Raven were laid up during the wintering of the Northmen.

CLASSES D AND E.

D.—*Forts consisting only of a Mount with encircling Ditch or Fosse.*

E.—*Fortified Mounts, either artificial or partly natural, with traces of an attached Court, or Bailey, or of two or more such Courts.*

For primary consideration we bring these two Classes into one introductory note, because they appear to be of contemporary construction, although Class E developed and prevailed beyond the use of type D. In the first instance, the mount is an isolated fortress, in the second it forms the principal defence of a larger fortified area consisting of one or more courtyards variously termed bailey and base-court.

Before entering on this subject, it will be advisable to understand the sort of stronghold to be dealt with, which, once familiar to the eye, will make the descriptions to be more easily grasped.

The mount is usually in form as a truncated cone, and generally surrounded by a fosse. Sometimes it is a natural height, scarped and adapted for the purpose; at others it is wholly artificial, and its construction must have entailed great labour, for although some of them are now quite low, others attained a height of over 100 ft. Some of them

have a flat, or table-top, summit, while others are hollowed with a slight saucer-like, or deep basin-shaped cavity, the use of which will be shortly considered. Connected with many of these mounts was a bailey; sometimes it was circular in plan, occasionally rectangular, as at Corfton Mount, Diddlebury, Salop, and nearly square at Haughley, Suffolk, and Culmington, Salop; but the form was generally oval, or of horseshoe plan, which area—greatly varying in size—was enclosed by a vallum and external fosse. Access to the mount was gained from the defended bailey.

The mount was sometimes situated within the bailey, but its position was more generally at one end, in a focus of the ellipse, or on the line of the vallum, when the fosse of the bailey ran into, and amalgamated with, the fosse of the mount.

The plan and section of the works at Seckington, Warwickshire (Fig. 37), will convey some idea of this type of fortress: it is in a fairly good state, but the courtyard is small; other entrenchments extend partially around it: they are, however, of a later date and do not affect it as an example; they are therefore left out of the plan.

Much controversy has arisen concerning the period in which the mount type of fortress was first introduced into this country, and various conclusions are far from harmonious.

This class of stronghold is found in Norway and Sweden, Denmark and Normandy, as fully as in England. Advocates for a Norman origin are emphatic in their statements, but the greater number of such forts as abound in Normandy can be traced to a more northern immigrating family; and although most of this type in England may first be recognisably noticed when in the hands of

Norman nobles, and certain representations of them received from their hands, there is every probability that England received her tuition in the construction of such mounds from the same Norse tribes as themselves.

Many reasons lead to the conclusion that mount fortresses were common to England before William's

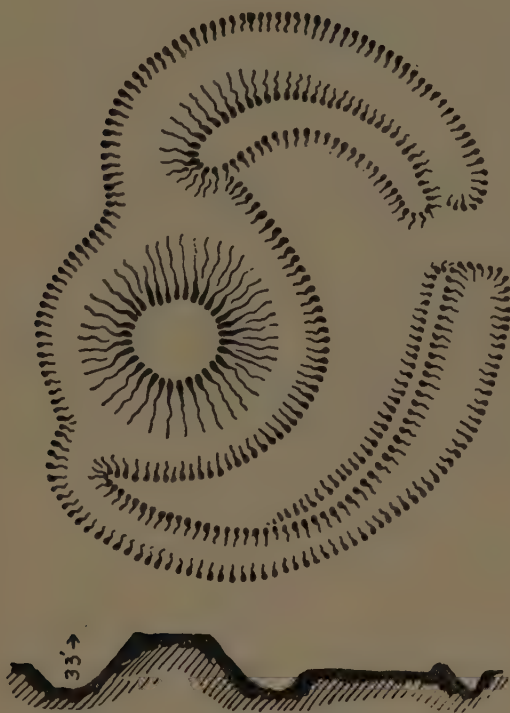


FIG. 37.—Plan and Elevation of
Seckington Mount.

invasion, and that they were seized and adapted and multiplied by the conquerors. Such a theory is supported by both documents and archæology. For the former, there is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the historian Asser; for the latter, the positions of the

mounds, and the conditions of life during the Saxon period.

As time progressed the right of private property became more pronounced, and while the Celtic hill forts were to protect the tribe, and Roman camps and stations were for the extension of empire, the Teutons erected these mounts primarily for the defence of their estates. It was the dawn of the feudal system, and these forts are found to have been erected at the headquarters of the landowners, where stood the *aula*, or hall, of the Saxon thane ; and when the estates were possessed by the Normans the strong places for their defence would naturally hold the same relation as before and become the *caput*, or head, of the estates of the baron. In this respect the mount castle of Eardisley, Herefordshire, is in *Domesday* called a *domus defensabilis*.

Many sites of mounts are known to have been the chief residences of Saxon nobles, as Eye, Suffolk, the hall of Earl Edric ; Wallingford, Berks., the hall of Wigod ; Halton, of Earl Tosti, and many others ; whilst more numerous instances are traceable as the *caput* of the Norman.

At the same time many of these forts were aggressive as well as defensive in origin. In Saxon days, when the incursions of the Danes were justly called "the Danish flood," we first find the utilisation of isolated mounts as the natural base of this type, as in the case of Kenwith. As the Norsemen spread over the land, towns were fortified to withstand their raids, and mount fortresses erected for the subjection of the populace ; defenders and invaders alike toiled hard at making a *geweorc* = a work, a *fastine* = a fastness or fortification, or a *burh* = a fort.

In England they are very numerous in the north-east, where the place names remind us of the harrying

of the Danes ; in the south-west, where the Saxons were gradually squeezing the Britons of Damnonia (Devon and Cornwall), and along the Welsh border are many others to stay the inroads of the unconquered British. A few are also found within Wales, either on the border or the sea-coast, where the English or the Norsemen had penetrated ; but at Llanidloes, Tafolwern and Talyhont are similar mounts, whose presence outside the sphere of Teuton influence are less easily explained ; they are doubtless British works though probably not indigenous, for the taking and retaking of some such positions in border warfare were frequent, and the Welsh had become conversant with the type. They are found in Scotland, as the Butte of Dunsinane, the traditional stronghold of Macbeth ; also in Ireland, but only within the Pale, that division influenced by the Norse and the Saxon, where the people still call them Danes-forts and raths. Gerald de Barri mentions the invasion of Ireland by the Norwegians in A.D. 838, under Thorgils, who erected castles, surrounded with deep ditches, and very lofty ; being also round, and most of them having three lines of defences.¹

Occasionally, the mounts are found with no visible signs of a fosse, as at Kenwith Castle, North Devon (Fig. 38). This mount, of elongated formation and not conical, is also called Cynwit, and Kenwic, and locally known as Henni Castle, or Henniborough. It was the scene of a stirring battle in the 9th century, a contest which proved

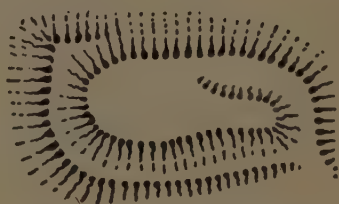


FIG. 38.—Kenwith Castle.

¹ *The Topography of Ireland*, c. XXXV, ii.

to be of important assistance in raising England from the humiliation of Danish domination.

It was in the year 878 that the brother of Hinguar and Halfdene—most probably Hubba—with twenty-three ships, came from his winter quarters in South Wales into Devon, where, we are told by Asser,¹ he was slain with twelve hundred warriors, “being killed, while committing his misdeeds, by the king’s servants, before the castle of Cynuit, into which many of the king’s henchmen, with their followers, had fled for safety. The pagans, seeing that the castle was altogether unprepared and unfortified, except that it had *walls in our own fashion*, determined not to assault it, because it was impregnable and secure on all sides except the eastern, as we ourselves have seen: but they began to blockade it, thinking that those within would soon surrender, either from famine or want of water, for the castle had no spring near it. The result, however, did not fall out as they expected; for the Christians, before they began to suffer from want, inspired by Heaven, judging it much better to gain victory or death, attacked the pagans suddenly in the morning, and from the first cut them down in great numbers, slaying also their king, so that few escaped to their ships; and there they gained a very large booty, amongst other things the standard called ‘Raven.’”

Although Camden failed to identify Kenwith, and Baxter asserted that it had been swallowed up by the sea, this “castle” remains in a very perfect condition; it had been entirely lost to sight and memory within a thick growth of scrub until re-discovered by Vidal in 1803.

This historic fort is now a verdure-clad rock, an isolated mound of rectangular plan, rising precipit-

¹ *Life of Alfred the Great.*

ously on all sides except the south-east, which point provided the entrance to a sloping path on to a platform 6 ft. wide; this gradually rises as it passes round the south and western sides, 12 ft. from the summit, and abruptly ends on the almost perpendicular northern side. From the entrance another steep incline on the eastern side curves along the north until it attains the level top of the stronghold. The earthen walls, or ramparts, of these ascents have been destroyed.

South-west of the mount, on Silford Moor (*Sel-fyrd* = great camp), are the remains of the entrenchments which were in course of construction by the Danes, for the purpose of blockade, when the sortie of the Saxons stopped their completion.

The line of retreat taken by the Danes to their ships is marked by "Bloody Corner," nearly two-thirds of the way between Kenwith and a good anchorage, at which spot the enemy evidently turned at bay, being too closely pursued to effect an embarkation, and possibly succeeded in reaching their ships. This theory receives the support of Ethelwerd, who, in his *Chronicle*, says that, after losing their king and eight hundred men, the Danes obtained the victory.

At a yet earlier date—A.D. 891¹ or 892²—we read that a battle was fought at Wodnesbeorh—that is, Woden's Mount—which resulted in the expulsion of Ceaulin from his kingdom of Wessex. The site of this engagement has been variously conjectured as Wansborough and Wemborow; while at Woodnesborough, or Woden's Town, in Kent, is an artificial mount. The name identifies it with the Saxons, but also suggests that it was constructed for religious rites.

¹ *Saxon Chronicle*.

² Florence of Worcester.

Kenwalk, king of Wessex, who had renewed the war against the Britons, fought a battle near the town of Pontesbury, Shropshire, in A.D. 661. A mount still stands near the church, which was probably thrown up on that occasion for the subjection of the British forces entrenched within the great double camp on Pontesbury Hill.

Our chief source of information concerning the places where Saxon strongholds were constructed is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*; it is there recorded that in A.D. 885 the Danes wrought a fastness around themselves when besieging the *ceaster* of Rochester; but Alfred raised the siege, and the Danes abandoned that *geweorc*. A great mound, the Bailey Hill, remains outside the lines of the Roman city. The Danes also stormed a Saxon *foestine* at Lymmemouth, "which was but half constructed"; and here a small mound yet stands in a corner of the older Roman camp.

The term "*dune*," or hill, with an individual's name prefixed, is mentioned in connection with warfare. Thus, at Seccandune, or Segeswalde (now called Seckington, Warwickshire), a fierce battle was fought in A.D. 755 or 757 between Cuthred of Wessex and Ethelbald of Mercia, when the latter was slain. An illustration of this mount will be seen in Fig. 37, p. 69.

At Esc's dune, or Æscesdune, two battles were fought, one in A.D. 661 between Kenwalk and Wulfhere, the son of Penda, the other in A.D. 871, when Ethelred and Alfred defeated the Danes, said by William of Malmesbury to be "one battle memorable beyond all the rest."¹

The Saxon word *burh* signifies a fortress and a fortified town; it is in the former sense that it is

¹ *Acts of the Kings*, II, 3.

treated in this chapter, although it is not always possible to distinguish with certainty to which it refers. The mount, or a group of works of which a mount is the principal feature, constituted a burh, that is, the mount and bailey.

The 10th century saw a great increase in the number of burhs constructed over the country to oppose the ravages of the invaders. Edward the Elder wrought many burhs, but his activity was equalled in this respect by that of his sister Ethelfleda, known as the Lady of Mercia: a simple enumeration of the forts constructed by her order and in her presence impresses one with her patriotic ardour in defending the land from the unscrupulous and barbarous hordes of Norsemen.

The burhs of Ethelfleda were—

A.D. 910. Bremesburh (Bramsbury).

912. Scærgate (Scergeat or Sarrat), Serratt, Herts.

„ Bridgnorth, Shropshire.

913. Tamworth, Staffordshire.

„ Stafford, Castle mound.

914. Eddesbury, Eddisbury Hill, Cheshire, an oval fortress of 11 acres.

„ Warwick.

915. Cyrigbyrig (Chirbury, Salop), slight remains.

„ Weardbyrig (Wardbury or Warburton).

„ Runcorn, Cheshire, traces on Castle Rock by the bank of the Mersey.

916. Stormed Brecknock.

917. Seized Derby.

918. Captured Leicester.

This courageous woman died in the midsummer of A.D. 918 in her palace within the burh of Tamworth.

The name given to this type of fortress is retained in certain place names, where the mounts which gave birth to that nomenclature still remain; thus at Bures, Essex, is the Latinised form of *Burh*, a part of its mediæval name of Bures ad Montem, or Bures at the Mount, where the mount is nearly 100 ft. in height.

Burwell, Cambridgeshire, is another example, where the first syllable bespeaks its origin; here, at the west of the church, is a mount 80 ft. in height and 50 ft. in diameter on the summit.

We have mentioned how the term *burh* was also applied to a fortified town, but that it is not always clear as to whether the word refers to a fort or a town. One instance of this doubt may be seen in the *Saxon Chronicle* under the year 886, when Alfred the Great, after repairing the burh of London, committed it to the keeping of Ethered the elderman. This may mean the town, though it probably was the "White Mount," the site of the present Tower of London, claimed by the British as "a place of splendid fame,"¹ within which, the Mabinogi of Branwen says, the head of Bran the Blessed, King of Britain, was buried, and from time immemorial was a fortified eminence.

We find the term given to a large area when, in A.D. 993, Abbot Kenulf first made the wall about his minster: "then gave he that to name Peterborough which aforetime was called Medeshamstede."²

In many instances the circumvallation of a Roman camp or station was used as a ready-made bailey and a mound erected within one corner of it; this is seen

¹ *Myvyrian Archæology*, I, p. 280. ² *Saxon Chronicle*.

in the camps at Burg (near Woodbridge) Castle Acre, etc., and in various stations as Lincoln, Leicester, Carlisle, etc. At Lincoln the mount fort is placed on the southern line of the Roman walls, the conical mount is 40 ft. in height and 100 ft. in diameter at the top; it formerly had its own fosse, which was connected with the fosse of the bailey. The vallum of the court is of the same date as the mount, it is from 150 ft. to 240 ft. broad and from 20 ft. to 30 ft. high, formed of earth heaped over the stone wall of the Romans, for the West Gate and the southern wall have been found buried within it. At Leicester the mount is outside the walls of the town, nevertheless the area of the town, with the mount, constituted the burh of the Saxons.

Burhs are constantly mentioned in the early laws of the Anglo-Saxons; King Athelstan decreed that every burh was to be repaired within fourteen days after Rogation-tide, and the same king in his restriction of minting appointed certain royal burhs for that purpose.

Other Saxon kings constituted royal burhs places of refuge, within which precincts the drawing of a sword in a private quarrel merited the death sentence; and the Burh-bote was a tax for keeping the defences in repair.

This type of earthwork figured in the fateful Battle of Senlac (or Hastings), when the whole history of England was again changed in the foundation of a new dynasty. After Duke William had by a stratagem withdrawn the Saxons from their ordered ranks, his troops turned and again became the aggressors. The Saxons "took up a position on a hillock, and hurling their weapons and throwing stones from the higher ground, easily repulsed the hot attack of the Normans, and there slew numbers of them. Then making their

way to *an eminence surrounded by a deep trench* by a path known to themselves, they there slew such a number of Normans that the inequalities of the ground were filled with corpses."¹ Florence of Worcester, describing the same engagement, says that Harold gave battle to the Normans at a place nine miles from Hastings, "where they had built a fort; the English being crowded in a confined position, many of them left their ranks."

In the Bayeux Tapestry is a needlework representation of this fort (Fig. 39)—a simple artificial hill,



FIG. 39.—The Battle of Senlac (Bayeux Tapestry).

against which the Norman horse hurl themselves with unavailing force; but the fosse is only indicated on the left-hand side. The summit, however, is evidently supposed to be hollowed, as the warriors upon it are hidden to the height of their knees.

Making due allowance for the designing of that period, and the materials of linen and worsted, this historical roll of needlework exhibits various scenes with great spirit, and is an invaluable help in conveying some idea of the earthworks under consideration.

The Norman-French term for this mount fortress is *motte*, and its use continued in England until long

¹ Roger of Wendover, A.D. 1066.

after the Conqueror's advent, being constantly found as *mote* or *mota* in Manorial Rolls and other records.

The structures erected upon these mounts were of wood, the artificially constructed mound being incapable of supporting a heavy tower of masonry. For a description of this type of fort it is necessary to go to a foreign source, to which attention has been drawn by M. de Caumont.

An episode in the Life of St. John, bishop of Terouane, who died in 1130, that occurred at his castle of Merchen, near Dixmude, Belgium, recounted in the *Acta Sanctorum*, January 27th, opens a page of history most welcome to our purpose:—

“It chanced that in a town called Merchem, Bishop John had a guest-house. There was also close to the court of the church a strong place, which might be regarded as a castle, or municipium, very lofty, built many years ago after the fashion of the country by the lord of the town. For it was customary for the rich men and nobles of those parts—in order to more freely wage their feuds and violence, and with greater power put down their equals and keep down their inferiors—to heap up a mound of earth as high as they were able, and to dig round it a broad, open and deep fosse, and to girdle the whole upper edge of the mound with a barrier of wooden planks stoutly fixed together, with numerous turrets set round, instead of a wall. Within was constructed a house, or rather a citadel, commanding the whole, so that the gate of entry could only be approached by a bridge, which, first springing from the counterscarp of the fosse, was gradually raised as it advanced, supported by columns two and two, or even three, trussed on either side

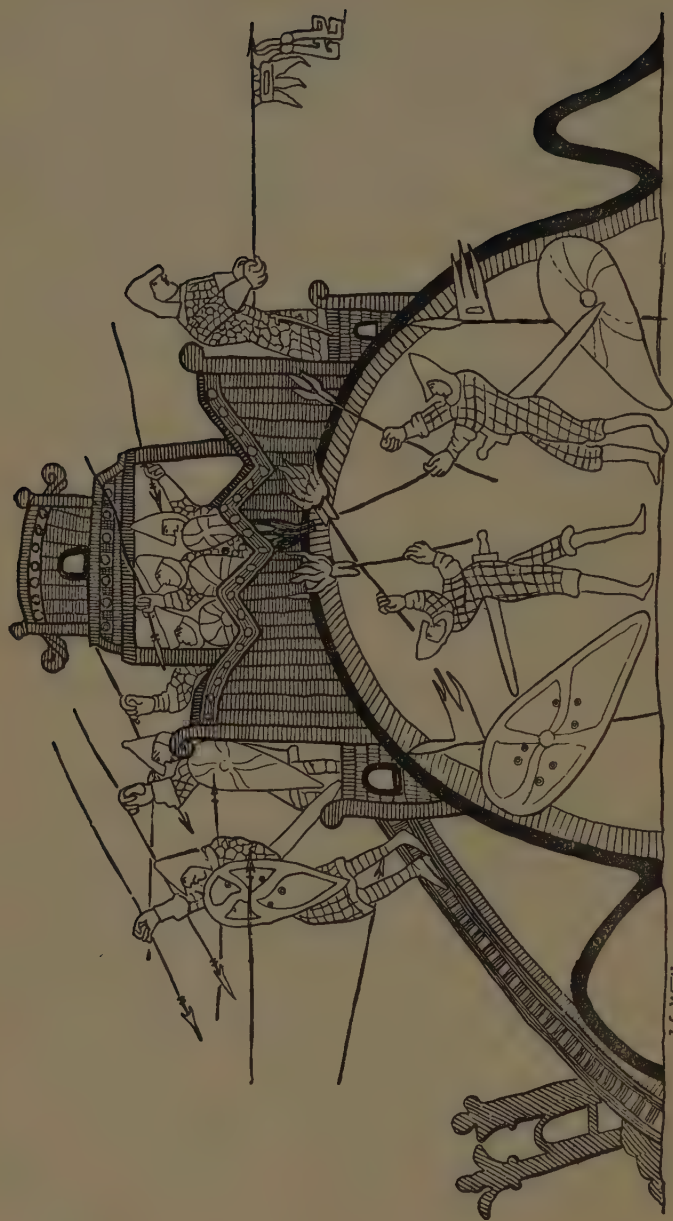


FIG. 40.—The Battle of Dinant (Bayeux Tapestry).

over convenient spans, crossing the fosse with a gradual ascent so as to reach the upper surface of the mount, at the extreme margin, on a level with the threshold of the gate."

The Bayeux Tapestry provides an excellent illustration to this description in the scene of the surrender of the castle of Dinant to Duke William. The edge of the earthwork, seen in section, is represented by the thick black line following the elevation of the mount, and the fosse with outer rampart surrounding it. The castle in two stages and the outer terrace is of wood, and lest the needlework fails to convey the idea of wood, the firing of it by two soldiers with flaming brands leaves no further doubt. The ladder by which the stronghold is gained touches the ground outside the rampart of the fosse, at which point it is defended by a structure which evidently represents a gate, a feature similar to one seen at the top of the ladder in Fig. 41. The garrison are all but overcome, and Conon delivers the keys of the fortress on the point of a lance.

On the same roll are four other representations of similar works. The escape of Conon (Fig. 41) from

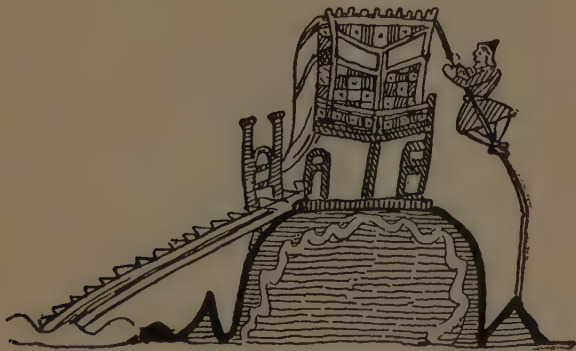


FIG. 41.—Dol Castle (Bayeux Tapestry).

the wooden keep of Dol by sliding down a rope flung outside the fosse, on the opposite side to that on which the approach is situated, illustrates a structure of two storeys, but of minor strength to that at Dinant, and the gateway is at the top of the ladder. The mount at Bagias (Fig. 42) has no fosse at its

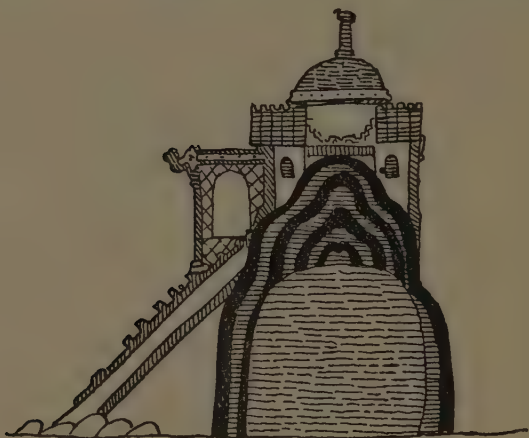


FIG. 42.—Bagias (Bayeux Tapestry).

base, but is crowned by an elaborate structure and an ornamented gateway. At Rednes, or Rennes, Castle (Fig. 43) is seen the section of a wall on



FIG. 43.—Rennes Castle (Bayeux Tapestry).

the right-hand side, which indicates how the base of the mount was surrounded by masonry, as will shortly be seen in the English castle of Tickhill (Fig. 45, p. 84).

Instructed by these foreign examples, it is time to turn to the only picture of an English castle in the same embroidery. After landing at Pevensey, William repaired the castle at Hastings (Fig. 44), and



FIG. 44.—Hastings Castle (Bayeux Tapestry).

beneath the inscription *ISTE IVSSIT VT FODERETVR CASTELLVM AD HESTENGA CEASTRA* is seen the active strengthening of the mount on which the wooden castle stands. Here the labourers are diligently picking and digging the ground where the fosse is to be trenched, while others throw the loosened earth and stones upon the mount. The heavy tower of masonry is founded upon the firm ground level, similar to that still seen at Clun in Shropshire.

Reference to the wooden palisading on the summit of a mount is found in the spirited description of the attack on Faringdon Castle by King Stephen. We read that "At one time darts hurled from afar, or

some great mass launched within the walls by the brawny sinews of the assailants, distressed them grievously, while at another time a valiant body of young troops, courageously scaling the steep ascent of the *lofty mound*, entered into a sharp conflict with them, the *stakes* only dividing them.”¹

The next development was the construction of a shell keep upon the summit of the mount; that is, the shell of a tower of masonry, containing no living rooms or heavy flooring dividing it into storeys, but an open erection for defensive and not habitable purposes; these were usually circular, sometimes polygonal. Very many ruins of such keeps remain; one may be seen in the old print of Clare Castle, and a very perfect example remains at Totnes, Devonshire.

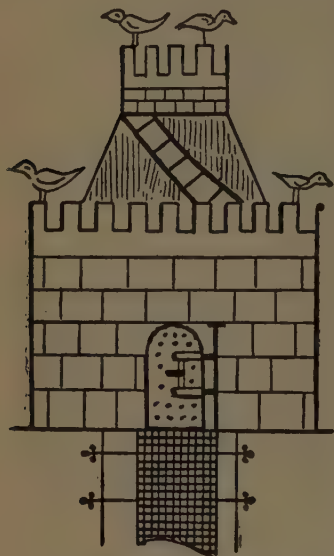


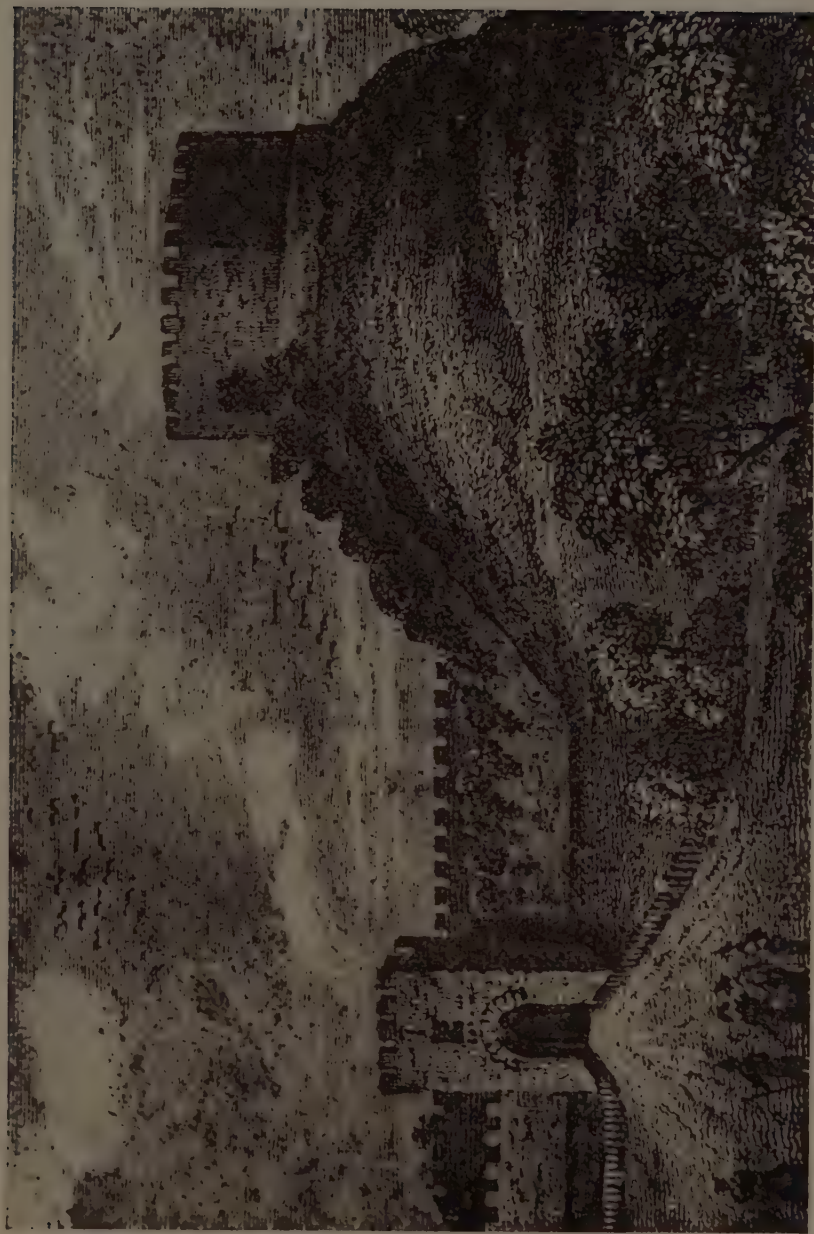
FIG. 45.—Tickhill Castle.

The mode of assault—when the ladder was presumably withdrawn—may be gathered from King Stephen’s directions at the siege of Winchcombe Castle, when he ordered some of the most able soldiers to keep up a thick and continuous shower of arrows, while others were to *scale the mound on their hands and knees*.²

But when the additional defence of a wall surrounded the base of the mount, as indicated in the illustration of Rennes (Fig. 43, p. 82), access to the mount would be more difficult. One representation of such a wall-begirt mount in England

¹ *Gesta Regis Stephani*, 1, ii.

² *Ibid.*



Clare Castle.—From an old print.

is found within an initial letter of a court roll of the *caput honoris*, or head of the honour of Tickhill, Yorkshire, of the 41st year of Elizabeth. This shows a very ancient fortified mount, 75 ft. high, with a diameter of 80 ft. at the summit; upon its summit is a shell keep, and the ladder for ascent is within the curtain wall, still surmounting the bank outside the fosse which surrounds the base of the mount: the grille at the bottom is supposed to illustrate the drawbridge.

In the *Acts of King Stephen* is a passage commenting on the great strength of a castle thus protected, and is preceded by a note from which is gathered that special appliances were made for making a breach in the earthen as well as the stone defences.

When Milo de Beauchamp refused to surrender the castle of Bedford to King Stephen, that sovereign encompassed it with his army. "Meanwhile he bestowed great cost and labour, and no little ingenuity and skill, in the construction of engines of various kinds which might be adjusted either to scatter the earthworks or dash down the wall. . . . But since a fortress strongly placed on a very lofty mound, environed with a high and strong wall, fortified with a tower of prodigious solidity, and garrisoned by hardy veterans who knew not what it was to yield, absolutely forbade the hope of a very speedy capture, the king, turning his attention to the transaction of such other affairs of State as were pressing urgently upon him, left the greater part of his army behind to carry on the siege."¹

The position chosen for a burh or motte was generally of strategical importance. Thus we read that at one part of Bristol "where it is accounted to be more

¹ *Gesta Regis Stephani*, l, i.

open to attack, and more approachable, a fortress rises upon a lofty mound, and this being fortified by a wall, by bulwarks and towers, and various engines, bids defiance to all attacks.”¹ Wareham Castle, situated between the Rivers Frome and Riddle, was of such strategical value that it was called the “Key of Purbeck.” Shrewsbury Castle is situated upon the isthmus of a peninsula, formed by the windings of the River Severn, which is occupied by the town. The site is upon a precipitous height 67 ft. above the river, and the artificial mount is 35 ft. high. Close by the junction of the Rivers Clun and Unk is Clun Castle, in such a position as to command two valleys, and also within signalling distance with chains of strongholds along the river towards the heart of the country and along the Welsh border. The latter was a source of danger from the time when the Saxons dispossessed the Britons of their patrimony until far into the Middle Ages. To check the patriotism of the Welsh the Marches were given to various Norman barons, who sublet these dangerous possessions to many knights; the latter erected castles along the border, and also seized many strongholds of the Saxons which had been constructed for the same purpose.

Most of the border castles were manned by the *Tenure by Castle Guard*, whereby adjacent lands were held by the tenant subject to his attending his lord for a certain period, providing men and arms, or some such service; as, for example, a tenement was held at Mariton in the 13th century by William de Bollers by the tenure of providing one soldier, equipped with a bow and arrow and a bolt, for a night and a day, in the time of war at the Mote of Poole—a mote identified with a mount formerly standing at Welshpool.

¹ *Gesta Regis Stephani*, 1, ii.

In many places double mount forts were constructed, though that custom appears to have been followed only by the Saxons. When the Danes threw up a work on the River Lea in A.D. 896, Alfred the Great made two mounts, one on each bank, enclosing the Vikings' ships and rendering them useless. Edward the Elder constructed two at Buckingham in A.D. 916, one on either bank; and in A.D. 919 he made a second mount on the south bank of the Ouse at Bedford, opposite one already standing. The same was done on the River Welland at Stamford, on the Trent at Nottingham, at Hertford and at York, and the only two remaining are at the latter city.

Natural heights were, if possible, adapted to this purpose, but the greater number are wholly artificial. Natural castle mounts are at Corfe, Durham, Exeter, Launceston, Montacute, etc., etc.; and partially natural, with artificial additions, at the castles of Bramber, Devizes, Hedingham, Pontefract, Sherborne, etc.

Sometimes a mount was upon a mount; at Whitwick in Leicestershire and Cause Castle in Shropshire the hill-top provides the baileys, the mount being upon it; at Cause Castle the mount and bailey, very strongly defended, occupy but a portion of the plateau; the mount is 61 ft. in height, and the deepest fosse 15 ft. deep with a counterscarp of 20 ft., but the whole hill-top is ramparted and fossed, thereby providing a protected area for the herds. Whitwick Castle is on a hill with precipitous sides, which form a natural escarpment from 33 ft. to 86 ft. above the surrounding ground, and in the middle of this elevated courtyard is the mount upon which stood the shell keep of the Earls of Leicester.

At Laxton, Nottinghamshire (Fig. 46), the mount upon mount is entirely artificial. The great mount

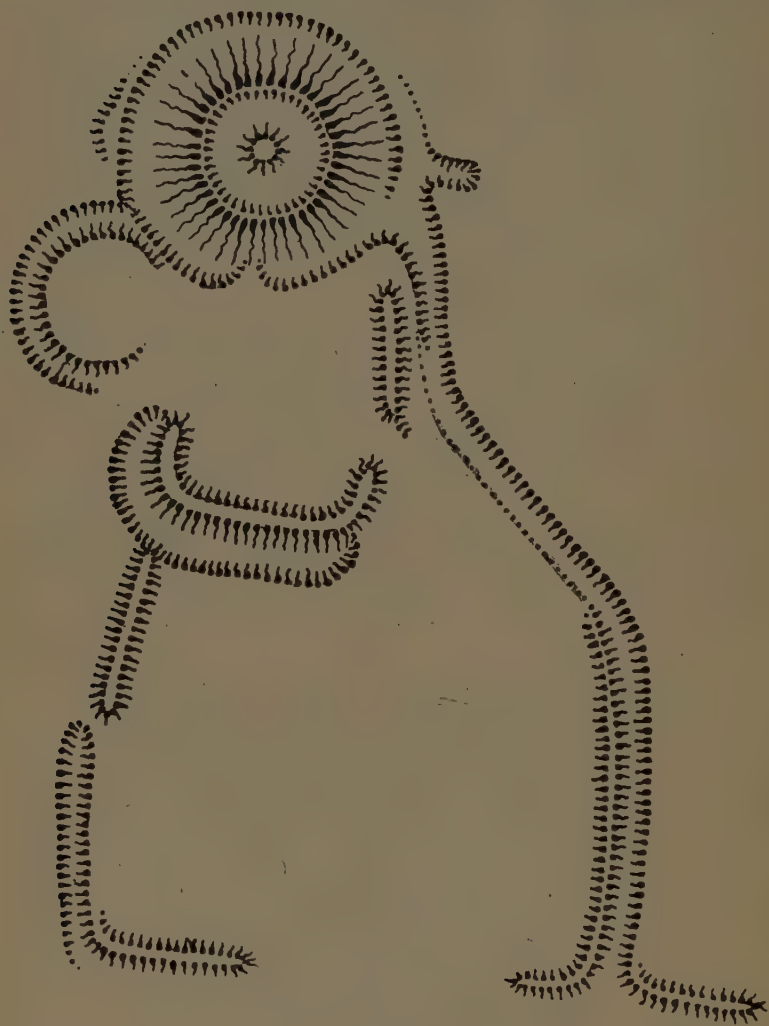


FIG. 46.—Laxton, Nottinghamshire.

is 816 ft. in circumference at the base, and is 71 ft. high; it is surrounded by a fosse 8 ft. deep, and the counterscarp is surmounted by a low bank; upon

the centre of its summit is a small mound, having a broad terrace with a rampart around it, an arrangement which gives ample room for an elaborate wooden keep such as is represented at Dinant (Fig. 40, p. 80). To the south of this peculiar mount are the remains of a strongly defended base-court, and still further south is a second court of large area, a later and less formidable addition.

Some of the largest mounts are at Brampton, Cumberland, which is 150 ft. in height; Wallingford, Berkshire; and Devizes, Wiltshire; at which castle—when the tunnel of the Great Western Railway was pierced beneath the works—the trenches were found to have been excavated 45 ft. beneath the present level; Cardiff, where the fosse has been cleared to its original depth; Thetford, Norfolk, one of the finest mounts, which covers 11 acres, is 1,000 ft. in circumference at the base, and rises 100 ft. in height, and with its double rampart 20 ft. in height the area covered is 24 acres; the summit is hollowed. At Chipping Ongar, Essex, quite near to London, where the fosse surrounding the huge mount now contains water, the massive rampart and fosse of the bailey in part remains, but the larger portion of it has perished, the village which was placed within its protection having outgrown its circumvallation, necessitating its levelling.

As an example of a mount with two baileys, Loddiswell Rings, Devon, is illustrated (Fig. 47). The mount, with a hollowed summit, is encircled by a fosse, and a crescent-shaped bailey defended by a rampart 14 ft. high is also surrounded by a fosse which enters the fosse of the mount. This formed a complete stronghold. The larger outer bailey was probably added somewhat later; it is of irregular elliptical plan, containing 10 acres, and is

surrounded by a strong rampart, in some places rising 16 ft. from the interior with an escarpment of nearly 25 ft. into a broad fosse, which, at the north-west, enters into and forms one with the fosse of the

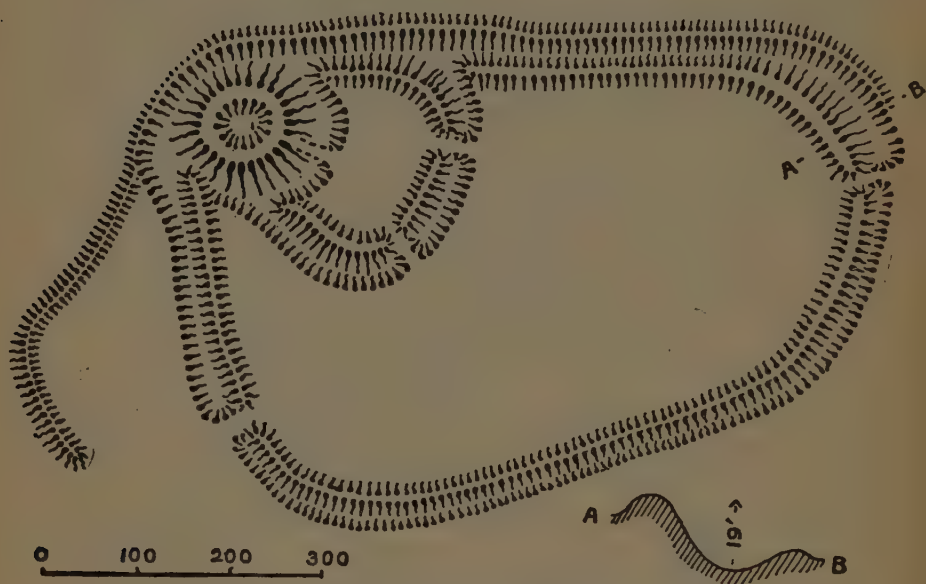


FIG. 47.—Loddiswell Rings, Black Down, Devon.

mount. The southern side of the outer bailey depends upon the natural slope down to the River Avon for additional defence, but the north, the most assailable side, has a second vallum outside the fosse. At the western side is a portion of another curved rampart, for the defence of the entrance there situated.

At Aslockton, Notts., More Castle, and Church Pulverbatch, Shropshire, and other places, the mount is almost independent of its courts, which extend one beyond the other in oblong plan; in these cases the baileys appear to be later additions to the original

befossed mount fort. At Church Pulverbatch (Fig. 48) the mount is 17 ft. high, with a level summit, and is cinctured by a fosse 6 ft. deep, while the escarpment of the rampart round the courts is 8 ft.

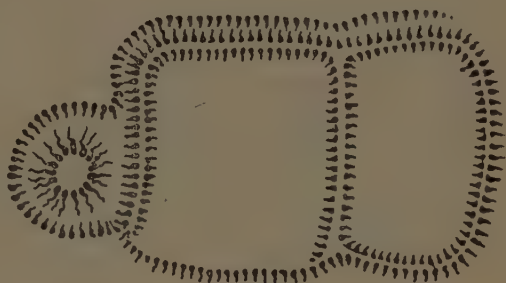


FIG. 48.—Church Pulverbatch, Salop.

The enormous number of these mount and bailey strongholds is a strong temptation to extend this chapter beyond the present limits. Many possess individual features of surpassing interest in situation, formation, mode of approach, or in the variety of plan. The systematic recording and illustrating of them in the Victoria County Histories is revealing almost countless numbers hitherto unknown.

Under the shadow of very many of these mounts, whether known by the name of burh or of motte, is found the parish church which the landowner, Saxon or Norman, erected for the use of his family and tenantry within the protection of the strong place at the head of his estate. Examples occur at Eye in Suffolk, Whittick in Leicestershire, and Lydford in Devonshire, but it is needless to attempt to enumerate localities, seeing that such custom was general.

CLASSES F & G.

CLASS F.—*Homestead Moats, such as abound in some Lowland Districts, consisting of Simple Enclosures formed into Artificial Islands by Water Moats.*

CLASS G.—*Enclosures, mostly rectangular, partaking of the form of F, but protected by stronger Defensive Works, ramparted and fossed, and in some instances provided with Outworks.*

These two Classes are amalgamated in this chapter, as we wish to consider them in the reverse order, and to follow the transition from the moated castle—other than of the mount type—to the fortified manor house of Class G, and finally the simple homestead moat of Class F.

Mediæval castles—not included in Class E—were usually surrounded by a moat and access obtained over a drawbridge, unless a craggy height or the waters of a river or lake afforded that natural protection which rendered artificial works unnecessary. The castles of Stokesay and Oakham may be cited. The former—in Shropshire—is surrounded by a moat 22 ft. wide, from which the walls of the castle immediately rise; it has a small courtyard on one side, and a picturesque half-timbered gate-house where the moat was spanned by the drawbridge. Oakham—in

Rutland—has a high vallum and wall around the inner edge of the site of the moat, enclosing a large court in which the castle was situated. The old hall is all that is left of the buildings, a grand example of the Transitional period.

The next grade is seen in the Peles, or peel-towers, fortified residences of the barons, of which so many are found in Tynedale. These were border houses, from which raids were made for cattle lifting and other more sanguinary expeditions. The earliest, and most imposing of this type is Chipchase Castle, near Birtley, Northumberland, built by Peter de Insula in the 13th century.

The castle, or moated house, of Wingfield, which the first Earl of Suffolk had licence to crenellate in 1384, is surrounded by a moat about 30 ft. wide, and represents a fortified mansion of the larger sort. Kirby Castle, at Kirby Muxloe, in Leicestershire (Fig. 49), another of the same type, was a fortified

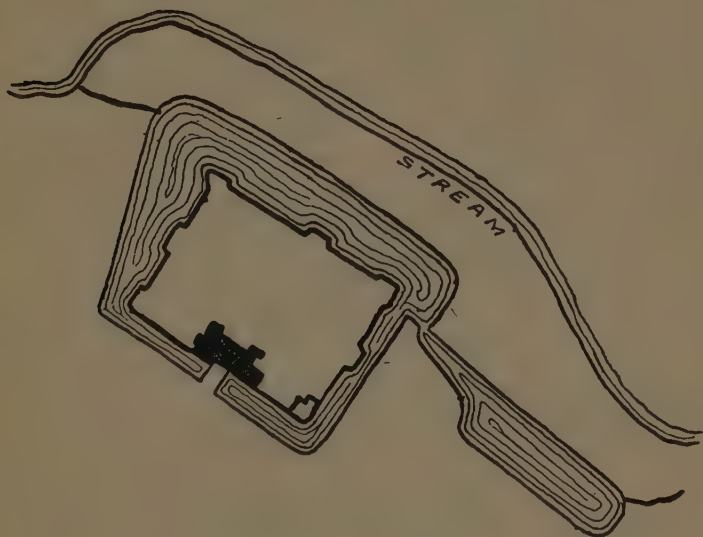


FIG. 49.—Kirby Castle.

manor house of Tudor days. The walls of the courtyard around a quadrangular site rose from the waters of a moat varying in breadth from 30 ft. to 70 ft. The moat was fed by a channel from the Rothley Brook, and at the opposite side is a sluice and small lake to receive the overflow, with an outlet for the waters to again flow into the river.

Patshull House, strongly moated and fortified, was surprised by Captain Stone of the Parliamentary Army in 1644, and, the drawbridge being down, his troops fought with the garrison inside the house.

An ideal moated grange is seen in Birt's Morton Court, Worcestershire, which is surrounded by a moat spanned by a bridge beneath a massive embattled gateway. Additional interest attaches to this house, which afforded a hiding place for Sir John Oldcastle.

Following the transition to a more simple type of this Class, we find the grounds around the manor house surrounded by earthen banks and trenches. Greasley Castle, in Nottinghamshire (Fig. 50), is a manorial stronghold around which the greater part of a rampart and moat remains. The fragment of another bank and moat indicate the former existence of a defence round the house in addition to that around the grounds. In one corner of the outer enclosure is a series of fish-ponds, another sort of earthwork frequently found in inland counties, and separately treated under Class X.

Sometimes more ancient earthworks were chosen as the sites of houses, where the defences were ready prepared; such is seen in Old Ingarsby Moat, Leicestershire. Here the house and chapel are within the formidable vallum and fosse of a Roman camp.

Low banks and trenches divide the grounds adjacent to many manorial residences into rectangular

sites, as at Kirby Bellars, which may possibly have

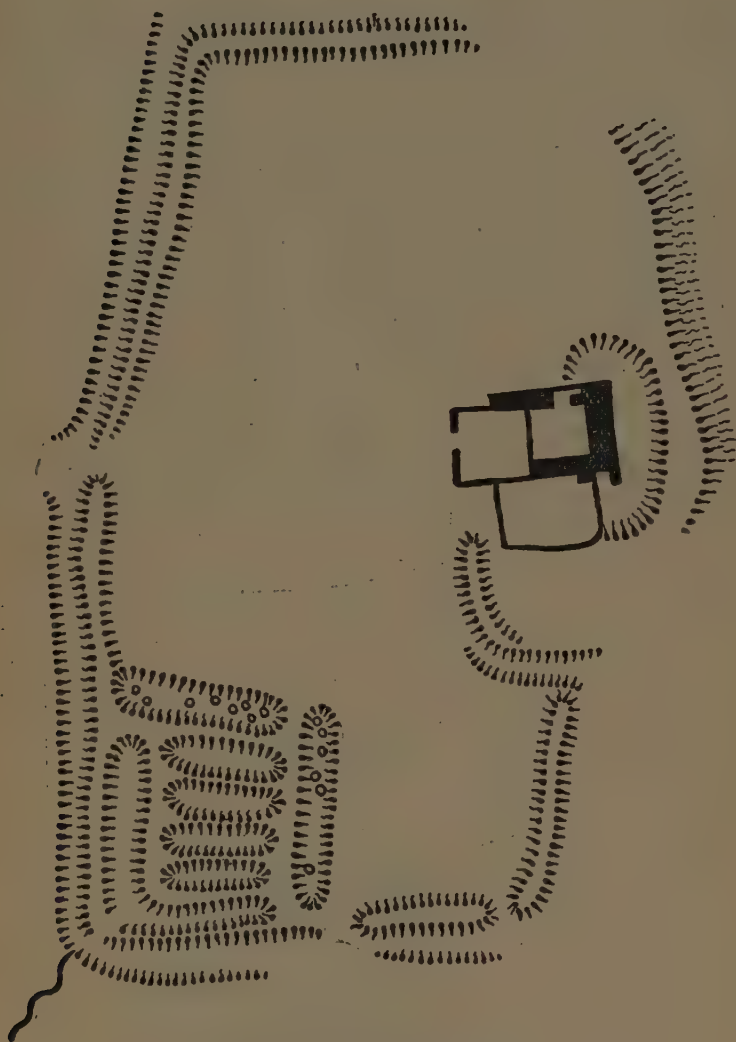


FIG. 50.—Greasley Castle.

been defensive in their origin, though probably they were for hedges or for the irrigation of the land.

A moat surrounds 35 acres of land at Fulham, within which stands the palace of the bishops of London; and a very perfect example of a double moat, one round the house and another round the grounds, compasses the site of Gisleham Manor House, Suffolk.

Simple homestead moats have sometimes a pre-Norman, and possibly a prehistoric, origin; mediæval manor houses and bartons rising and replacing others at various periods within the protecting cincture. The oval moat is considered to betoken an earlier date than those of quadrangular form; the construction of the latter continued during Elizabeth's reign. So numerous are they, usually differing in minor details, that a typical example only is given, and that a moat around the 13th century manor house of Tiptofts, in Essex, the plan of which (Fig. 51)

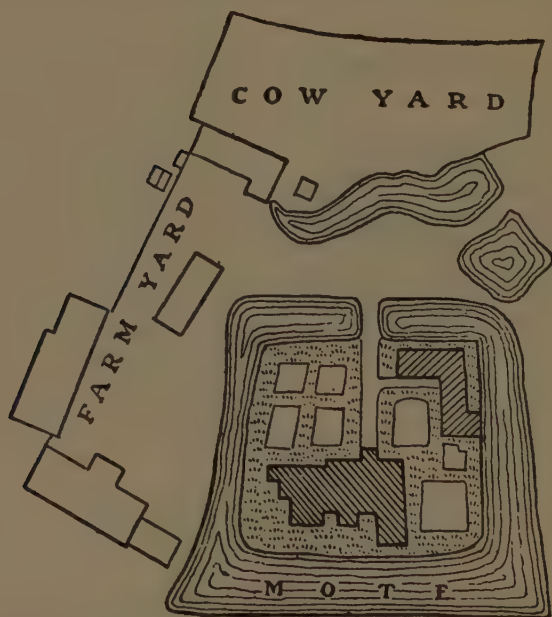


FIG. 51.—Tiptofts Manor House.

is illustrated in a map dated 1746, preserved at Brasenose College, Oxford.

Old manor houses are now often found surviving as farmsteads, and the moats—trodden out of shape by cattle—convey a poor idea of their former defensive strength.

Some monastic sites were also protected by ramparts and moats; they are found in Bedfordshire, Yorkshire, and other counties; and examples may be seen at the ruins of the Augustinian Priory of Ulverscroft, and the Preceptory of Knights Hospitallers at Yeaveley, Derbyshire, now known as Stydd Hall.

CLASS H.

Ancient Village Sites protected by Ramparts or Fosses.

When considering ancient towns protected by earthworks, we reluctantly have to omit the most perfect British enclosure of Grimspound, on Dartmoor; for that intensely interesting site of Neolithic dwellings is surrounded by a stone wall, and is not an earthwork.

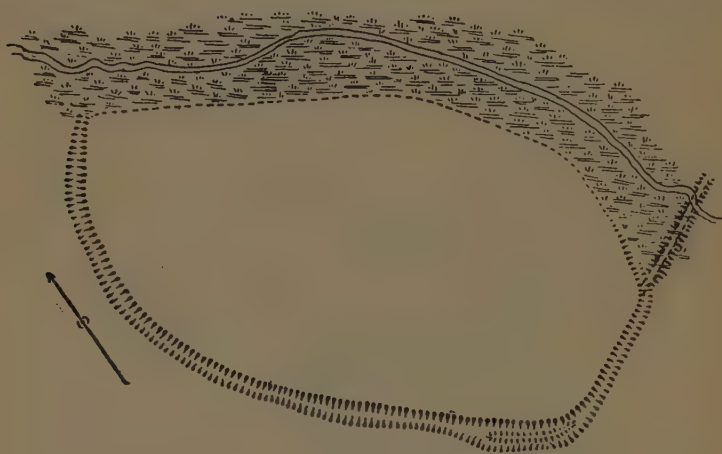


FIG. 52.—British Verulam.

The first documentary description of a British *oppidum*, or town, is in Cæsar,¹ from whom we learn that the capital town of Cassivellaunus—the chief of

¹ *De Bell. Gall.*, V, c. xxi.

the Catuvellauni tribe—more or less known since the days of the Roman occupation as Verulam, close to the city of St. Albans—was defended by woods and morasses, in which a very large number of men and of cattle had been collected. “Now the Britons, when they fortify the intricate woods, in which they are wont to assemble for the purpose of avoiding the incursion of an enemy, with an entrenchment and a rampart, call it a town.” This place was “admirably fortified by nature and art.” It is situated at the base of Holmhurst Hill, on which stands the church of the Abbey of St. Alban, and is still encircled on three sides by the British fosse; a lake defended the northern side. Although the features of the site are Roman, with fragments of their wall remaining on the inner side of the fosse, the size and form of plan appears to have been adapted by the Romans without alteration of the British outline.

Strabo also contributes to our knowledge of British *oppida*, he tells us that “Forests are their cities, for having enclosed an ample space with felled trees they make themselves huts therein, and lodge their cattle, though not for any long continuance.”¹

The site of a British village at Finkley, near Andover, within the recesses of an ancient forest, has yielded a great quantity of very primitive domestic utensils.

When it is remembered that Britain was anciently covered by vast forests, to a far greater extent than is now conceivable, the descriptions of these classical historians will be better understood. Cæsar adds that “the number of the people is countless, and their buildings exceedingly numerous.”

Many of the earthworks generally classified as Hill Forts were doubtless towns, especially when situated

¹ *Strabo*, IV, c. v, §2.

near rivers, and the absence of relics of habitations must not invariably lead to the conclusion that all such enclosures were but temporarily occupied, though it is probable that the natives were more widely scattered over the country in times of peace and during the summer.

Old Oswestry (Fig. 53), with its circumvallation of



FIG. 53.—Old Oswestry.

three to five earthen walls, on high ground, and formerly screened by forest trees, was probably a town of great strength and large population. No

signs of habitations remain within its area, but within the thickness of two combined ramparts are six large hollows, evidently the site of huts, capable of holding many people. The defences of this town are very strong, and the engineering of the entrenchments shows great skill.

Maiden Castle, near Dorchester (Fig. 26, p. 48), whilst a hill fortification, is so vast that it leads to the conclusion that it was a town with an extensive population. In many strongholds foundations of numerous huts remain; this is seen to advantage in the fortified oppidum on the Eildon Hills in Roxburghshire (Fig. 54), where the summit of a hill presents a fairly level, nearly oblong area, about 800 ft. long and 400 ft. broad, covered by nearly two hundred hut-circles. South-west of the summit are several small plateaux, also occupied by numerous horse-shoe excavations for the bases of huts; they are cut into the slope of the hill, so that side farthest from the doorway has a height of from 3 ft. to 5 ft. To the south of the summit and at a much lower level is a broad plateau, now cultivated, where the plough has probably levelled the sites of many more habitations.

The whole of the ground thus occupied is surrounded by defensive works about 70 ft. below the top of the hill. This village was described in 1747 as "well fortified with two fosses and dikes of earth more than a mile and a-half in circuit, with a large plain near the top of the hill, called the Floors." The latter term was of course derived from the plans of the huts; but the description of the entrenchments does not apply to their present state. The lines of defence are generally of three terraces 7 ft. and 8 ft. wide, and some 18 ft. below each other, except on the south, where there are but two lines. Possibly the counterscarps, which would make



fosses of the present terraces, have perished, but the only visible vallum in such a position is at the south-east.

Entrances to the enclosure were at the west and east of the southern plateau. That at the west was



FIG. 54.—Plan and North View of Eildon Hill.

most accessible, and here the incurved lines of defence command the approach and cover the entrance.

The eastern entrance is near the base of the precipitous side of the summit; to the north of it are three low broad ramparts of stones, and to the south a scarp of 25 ft., with a short length of fosse and agger at the foot, extends in front of the inner entrance, and thus provides a covered oblique path. Springs of water are within the defences.

A glance at the sketch and plan of Eildon Hill (Fig. 54) will convey some idea of the arrangement of this town, in which 300 hut bases remain, with indications of others, whilst a probable wholesale destruction has occurred on the southern part of the site. Its position, upon a projection into an angle of the River Tweed, 1,150 ft. above its waters, commands a pass into the heart of Scotland.

In Jorden's Wood, between Darenth and Cray, in Kent, are extensive banks with external ditches of a British village. The period of this settlement may be confidently asserted, for an angle of the works was utilised by the Romans as a vallum to two sides of a camp. One cluster of hut-circles has been found, but the whole area is covered with flint flakes, arrow heads, and various implements. The plan of the village is lost by the encroachments of agriculture, but appears to have attained its irregular outlines by extensions at different periods of a primitive age; the ditches have been found to communicate with groups of dene-holes at the north, north-west, and south of the village.

In our treatment of Classes D and E we have dealt with the Saxon *burh* as applied to a fortress; here it is considered as a village or town. Lydford and Wareham may be taken as illustrations, in both of which is a fort of the mount type.

The rampart on the eastern side of the once important town of Lydford traverses the promontory on

which the remnants of the town are situated. In this position it probably defended a prehistoric stronghold of the type of Class A. Strengthened and repaired, it still served its original purpose when, in A.D. 997, it was assaulted by the Danes, who penetrated Devonshire by way of the Tamar "until they came to Hlidaforda, burning and slaying everything they met." Still was its protection required when Athelstan established a mint within the town, and when the castle provided the Stannary prison for defaulting tinnerns ; and still that early rampart survives, while the thriving town has dwindled to a mean village.

Huge earthworks still surround the town of Wareham, in Dorset, except on the south, enclosing a site of about 1,000 acres, and presents one of the most perfect examples of this Class.

CLASS X.

Earthworks which fall under none of the previous Classes.

The miscellaneous works that find no special or primary classification are numerous and varied, embracing banks and ditches for all sorts of purposes. This Class may be sub-divided into many divisions, for uses both known and undetermined. Such are :—

- (a) Dykes for boundary lines of tribal territories, Inimical Barriers, Manorial Fences, Park Enclosures, or Cattle Folds.
- (b) Entrenchments, grouped in parallel lines of no form of encampment, outworks to a stronghold, or isolated aggers.
- (c) Definite works, the purpose of which is unknown.
- (d) Mediæval system of drainage.
- (e) Dene-holes.
- (f) Amphitheatres.
- (g) Fish-ponds, or stews.
- (h) Tumuli.
- (i) Moot-hills.

(a) DYKES.

The numerous dykes intersecting various districts of England have given rise to innumerable conjectures as to their age, purposes, and constructors.

Such earthworks appear to have originated for both military and economic purposes. As territorial boundaries, and therefore defensive to a certain extent; and to prevent the straying of cattle, the sole riches of many tribes and peoples: these appear to have been constructed by Britons, Romans, and Saxons alike. The works of the latter—if surviving names are of any import—seem to predominate. In these works of vallum and fosse, the fosse would be on the exterior of the vallum, towards that side from which raids and assaults would be expected; consequently the inner side of the vallum, or the other side to that occupied by the fosse, may be taken as the territory of some particular tribe or of a people extending their conquests.

The dykes of a civil character, to reclaim land from the encroachments of the sea or other inundation, had no necessity for a fosse, and may generally be attributed to the Romans, or in mediæval times to the monks, who laboured assiduously in this cause.

A few only of the principal dykes can now be considered, the number of them throughout the country being too great to include many in a work of this size.

The numerous lengths of dyke in North Wiltshire, called the Belgic Dykes, are supposed to have been thrown up by the invading Belgæ, one of the earliest people from the Continent to dispossess the original inhabitants. But Romano-British remains, found beneath some of them, imply their use—if not origin

—by the Roman legions or a later people. Fragments of these banks remaining between tilled fields are numerous in the neighbourhood of Amesbury and Salisbury.

The great vallum which runs nearly parallel to the Roman Wall of Hadrian (Fig. 55), crossing the island



FIG. 55.—Plan and Section of Earthworks at Hadrian's Wall.

from Bowness on the Solway to Wall's End on the Tyne, has one fosse to the south. This led Mr. McKenny Hughes to attribute it to the Picts, and he places it at a much earlier period than the *murus* or stone wall of the Romans. It is, however, supposed that while the stone wall, with its northern fosse of huge proportions—30 ft. wide and 15 ft. deep—was to bar the incursions of unconquered Scotland, the three ramparts and fosse on the southern side was to check any surprise from the risings of the conquered

Britons, leaving a strip of ground for a military road between the defences for the free operation of the Roman cohorts.

Another great dyke of the Romans was made by Antoninus Pius, who united the forts of Agricola between the Forth and the Clyde by an earthen barrier, with a platform for the soldiers on its southern side. The works are colossal—in the vicinity of Falkirk the vallum, greatly debased, is 24 ft. broad and 20 ft. high, and the fosse, 22 ft. distant from it, is nearly 50 ft. wide and 23 ft. deep. Another vallum of similar proportions and equal distance from the fosse, was formerly to the north of it; traffic has destroyed it, except in a few places, and by far the best view is obtained at Ferguston Moor.

Of the vallum of Antoninus the Venerable Bede writes: "The islanders (Britons) raising the wall as they had been directed, not of stone, as having no artist capable of such a work, but of sods, made it of no use. However, they drew it for many miles between the two bays or inlets of the seas, of which we have spoken, to the end that where the defence of the water was wanting, they might use the rampart to defend their borders from the irruptions of the enemies. Of which work there erected, that is, of a rampart of extraordinary breadth and height, there are evident remains to be seen at this day."¹

Grimm's Dyke—Gryme, Grimmer, or Grimmes Dykes—are names constantly found in different localities. It is applied to the wall of Antoninus, to one in Wilts, one in Middlesex, and in other counties; the etymology is said to be Norse, but is equally common to the Saxon, and being foisted on some works known to be of earlier origin, it is

¹ *Ecclesiastical History*, I, xii.

valueless in deciding the race by whom they were constructed. We can only think that the works were so vast that they were thought to be the work of spirits, witchcraft, or of the devil—as the word denotes—by a people who saw them, but did not construct them.

Grimm's Dyke, in Pinner and Harrow Weald parishes, Middlesex, remains in places. It is a boundary work of vallum and fosse; the latter on the south-eastern side suggests that it was part of the defences of the British tribe Catuvellauni, and looked out upon the marshland of the Thames that extended generally from the River Brent to the River Lea. The dyke is badly mutilated, but at its best preserved point the vallum is 63 ft. wide at the base, 15 ft. high, and the fosse, 21 ft. wide, is 5 ft. deep.

Wansdyke, or Woden's Dyke, is a stupendous entrenchment traced from Maes Knoll Camp, in Somersetshire, eastward north of Devizes. The fosse is north of the vallum, and the four camps along its line have—very doubtfully—been attributed to Cissa, a son of Ælla, in the fifth century.

Offa's Dyke, which, for the greater part, divides Wales from England, extending from the Clwyddian Hills, north of the River Wye, to Caedwn, near Mold, is attributed to that energetic Saxon king, whose name it bears, by some of the most ancient existing records. In the *Brut y Tywysogion* it is said that this *Clawdd Offa*, or Dyke Offa, was made by that king after Mercia had been laid waste by the Cymry in A.D. 765, that it was partially destroyed ten years later, and that Offa made another nearer to the midlands.

The other dyke here mentioned refers to that known as Wat's Dyke, an entrenchment running nearly parallel to that of Offa—varying 1,500 ft. to

3 miles eastward of it—for 19 miles, from near Mold to Caergeorle, and considered to be earlier than Offa's Dyke. Its position in relation to Old Oswestry may be seen in Fig. 53, p. 100.

Caradoc of Llangarvan says, that in consequence of the deep ditch called Offa's Dyke, the royal city of the Princes of Powys was moved from Shrewsbury to Mathyraval, in Montgomeryshire. And Asser, in his *Life of Alfred*, says that a great vallum was made from sea to sea between Britain and Mercia by direction of Offa.

There has been continual controversy concerning this dyke. Professor Earle implies that it was a boundary to guard the Mercian border rather than a fortification to defend; others contend that it was impossible to man such a length of defence, and that it was solely to prevent cattle lifting; and Dr. Guest considers it was a boundary line. It was probably for all of these purposes as circumstances demanded; but so great a work in this position must have included a military design. The fosse is on the western, the British or Welsh side, but in places this has been levelled. The width of the work is 75 ft.; and to take one place—in the parish of Clun—the vallum rises 10 ft. in height on the Saxon side, and with rotund curve descends 12 ft. into a fosse with a counterscarp 5 ft. high, and an outer bank 3 ft. above the level. At intervals, along its sinuous course, over hill and dale, defensive earthworks occur, many of them predating Saxon times, and serving as points between which the dyke was made; these were supplemented at a later period by many strongholds of the mount type, and stringent laws were made to restrain the inroads of the British, burning to revenge the loss of their patrimony and resenting the oppression of their conquerors.

That district formerly known as the "Great Level of the Fens," extending inland from the Wash, comprised about 400,000 acres. It was intersected by the trackways of the British connecting the various islands which rose from its marshy waste ; in fact, the great use of this vast swamp was to make unfriendly access difficult to those islands hidden midst the tall reeds and sedges, and thus provide safe retreats. Among them was the Isle of Ely, whose watery cincture preserved the chastity of St. Etheldreda, and on which was the Camp of Refuge, which the pages of Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake* has made so familiar to us.

During the period of the Roman occupation, that people did much to drain and reclaim the land. They utilised the rivers as arterial drains and directed subsidiary ones into them ; they constructed dykes to withstand the sea, first those nearer inland and afterwards those nearer the ebb tide ; one of the principal, called "the Raven," runs eastward from the Welland to the Delph Bank, with various fortresses on the landward side. To allow a means of escape for the rainfall, which would be retained by these sea walls, the huge "Car Dyke" was made : this is 60 ft. wide and now extends 40 miles, but is supposed to have originally extended from Ramsay to Lincoln. Without these works the towns of Boston, Spalding, and Wisbech, would have no being, as their sites were covered daily by the tides.

The Britons, however, should not have their works of the same character ignored. In the Welsh *Triad*, xli, we read that, one evening, when Gwyddno Garanhir was king of Cantref y Gwaelod, a territory on the sea coast protected from the waters by a high embankment, there was revelry at Court, and Seithenin, the custodian of the bank, became intoxicated and

neglected his duty, whereby the sea broke through its bounds and the land was submerged, never again to be reclaimed, lives were lost and cities destroyed, and Cardigan Bay is said to cover the site of the once flourishing kingdom.

The plaint of the doomed is embodied in the poem of "Gwyddno Garanhir"¹:—

“Stand forth Seithenin and behold the dwelling of heroes,—
the plain of Gwyddno the ocean covers !

Accursed be the sea guard, who, after his carousal, let loose
the destroying fountain of the raging deep.

Accursed be the watcher who, after his drunken revelry,
loosed the fountain of the desolating sea.

A cry from the sea arises above the ramparts ; even to
heaven does it ascend,—after the fierce excess comes
the long cessation !

A cry from the sea arises above the ramparts ; even to
heaven does the supplication come !—after excess there
ensues restraint !

A cry from the sea awakens me this night !—

A cry from the sea arises above the winds !

A cry from the sea impels me from my place of rest this
night !

After excess comes the far extending death !”

Banks of earth were also thrown up as hedges to manorial lands ; a portion of one which formed the boundary of the archiepiscopal manor of Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, remains to the extent of about a mile and a-half between the villages of Blyth and Scrooby. The bank on the west side is enclosed in Serlby Park, and the fosse is used as a road between the villages mentioned above. The construction of

¹ *Myvyrian Archaeology*, I, 165.

such dykes was one of the conditions in the partition deed of the township of Embleton, Northumberland, in which various tracts of land are enumerated, comprising from twelve to many hundreds of acres. One of many similar entries is as follows :—

“Item the said Thomas Wood Major Algood John Doubleday William Cook and Edward Haggerston do order and award that the said Charles Earl of Tankerville shall erect and build or cause to be erected and built and for ever after maintained and kept in good repair one moiety or half part of a Dike or Hedge to separate and divide his said allottments of the premises from the said Richard Witton and John Darling their said allottment of the premises.”

This may have some bearing on those very lengthy banks which enclose extensive tracts of country. The “Haia” is the name of a large enclosure in the north of England, the extent of which in some cases has given rise to many conjectures as to its original purpose. *Domesday Book* may be brought to our aid, and we find “*Haia in qua capiebantur ferate*”; they are, then, places into which wild beasts were driven, and the surrounding banks were the boundaries to a Chace, that the quarry—whilst preserved in a wild state—should not flee beyond the huntsman’s range. The name is phonetically preserved in Hays Park, Knaresborough; Hawes Park, Skipton Castle, etc.

The conditions of mediæval life on the Northumbrian border rendered some defence against cattle-lifting and robbery imperative; this led to large areas being enclosed in addition to defended residences; thus, a village was composed of a number of fortified dwellings, or small peels, and these were surrounded

by three separate walls; the first cinctured the gardens around the towers, the second enclosed the titled lands, and the third included the common.

All such defences are preferably included among the dykes rather than as "simple enclosures," and it is interesting to bear in mind that—at least in Shropshire—the hollowed channel and the raised bank have both the name of ditch, and the difference is conveyed only in the pronunciation, the channel is called a *ditch* and the vallum is pronounced as *dytch*. Some of these enclosures have the ditch inside the vallum whereby the inner area was drained, and it is conjectured that these were folds for cattle.

(b) VARIOUS ENTRENCHMENTS.

Groups of parallel lines of entrenchments found at various parts of the coast have been attributed to the Danes, but without sufficient evidence to give them the monopoly. Situated upon the cliffs overlooking a probable landing place, they may reasonably be considered as works when a maritime power was to be reckoned with, and at no early period was this more likely than when "sea-birds" of the Norse and Danish Vikings were ploughing the waters around our coasts, entering the estuaries of the rivers to get at more inland booty, and leaving a track of carnage in their wake. These works may have been thrown up to cover the slingers, archers, or javelin men, who opposed a landing, or as a temporary defence for a body of men who bivouacked on land in sight of their ships.

They are formed on ground sloping to the sea, with higher ground inland, that it does not appear that the

occupants of the trenches feared an assault from the landward, which favours the first theory.

One example will suffice. In North Devon (Fig. 56), upon the shoulder of the cliff above Saunton

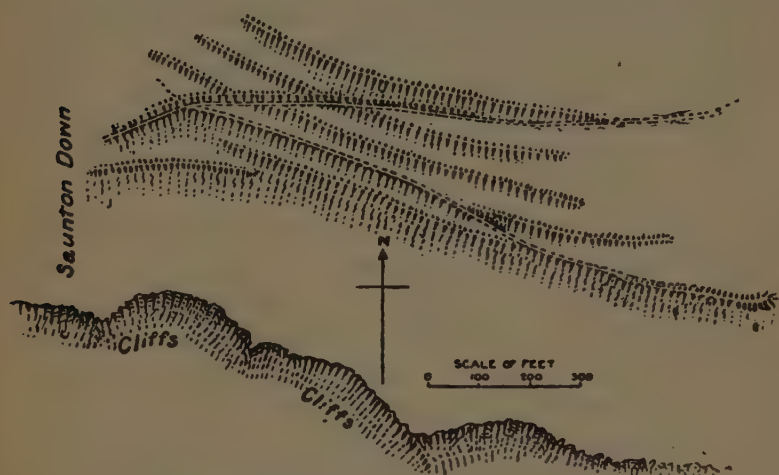


FIG. 56.—Entrenchments at Braunton, Devon.

Sands, are five parallel banks 1,400 ft. long, with another bank obliquely crossing them. At the highest point they are but 4 ft., but they cannot present anything like their former appearance, for Lysons called it "The Castle," and says that it had a large vallum and fosse on the northern, or land, side.

Single and double lines of vallum and fosse, detached from any other work, are sometimes found, as the "Raw Dykes," less than a mile south of Leicester Castle. This work consists of a double vallum and intermediate fosse of great strength, the escarpments being from 20 ft. to 50 ft. in height. Within memory these were twice their present length; but they give no suggestion of having been connected with any other stronghold, Roman coins found in

the earth indicate an early date, and may have formed an outwork to the Roman station of *Rataë*, or Leicester.

Similar lines are on the hill-side two miles from Bridgnorth, and command a wide valley.

Isolated aggers are also found in the suburbs of Leicester, and elsewhere, which were evidently for the defence of, or assault on, the town.

(c) FOR UNKNOWN PURPOSES.

Occasionally we find an elaborately designed earth-work of laborious construction, the use of which is entirely unknown. Thus at Kirkby Mallory, in Leicestershire, the "Kirkby Moats" are a perpetual puzzle. A flat area, 90 ft. square, is surrounded by three great moats and a triple vallum, the latter averaging 17 ft. in height, and some of the trenches 45 ft. wide. No sign of any former building exists, and no tradition is attached to the site; there is no evidence to warrant its insertion among Homestead Moats, and it is left for future antiquaries to find the intention of its formation. One other similar work is known, near Aldershot, called "Bats' Hog Sty"; but the banks in this case do not exceed 5 ft. in height.

Overlooking the entrance to Dartmouth Harbour, 300 ft. above the town, is a curiously-shaped earth-work known as "Gallants Bower." It cannot be included in Class C, for the vallum is a succession of raised and rounded platforms irregularly placed, protecting a veritable bower, for in the interior hollow perfect peace is found from the war of the elements without, which, at this height, are frequently exceeding fierce. The only service for which this fantastic work may be conceived is as an observatory from which to espy the approach of an enemy from the sea towards the estuary of the Dart.

(d) SANITARY WORKS.

We are constantly hearing of mysterious passages being associated with castles, monasteries, or other ancient buildings—passages which for the most part exist in an imagination built upon the most unstable legend, growing in the mind until, to that mind, it becomes a reality, and from which all kinds of mythical stories are evolved. And when there is some sort of work suggesting a foundation for these cherished ideas, it seems cruel to rend the veil of romance, to stop the flow of sweet scandalous gossip, and show that they are simply drains. Yet so it is, and, as in the system of drainage of the Cistercian Abbey of Garendon, Leicestershire, the monastic buildings are entirely destroyed, leaving extensive remains of the waterworks, drainage, and fish-ponds, dyked and embanked, connected with a tributary of the River Soar.

(e) DENE-HOLES.

Another type of earthwork, and that subterranean, takes the form of deep vertical shafts descending into underground chambers, works that have caused much perplexity and conjecture as to their use. They are known as Dene-holes, possibly derived from the Anglo-Saxon *denu*, a secluded place, or den; they are most numerous in Kent and Essex, but may also be found in other counties.

The circular shafts are of varied depth, extending sometimes to 80 ft., and are from 2 ft. to 3 ft. 6 in. in diameter, with foot holes frequently made in the sides. At the bottom are caves or chambers which in plan are round, square, double trefoil, and quatrefoil,

excavated as one chamber, or a group, and sometimes with pillars left to support the roof; they are from 15 ft. to, occasionally, 70 ft. in diameter or length,

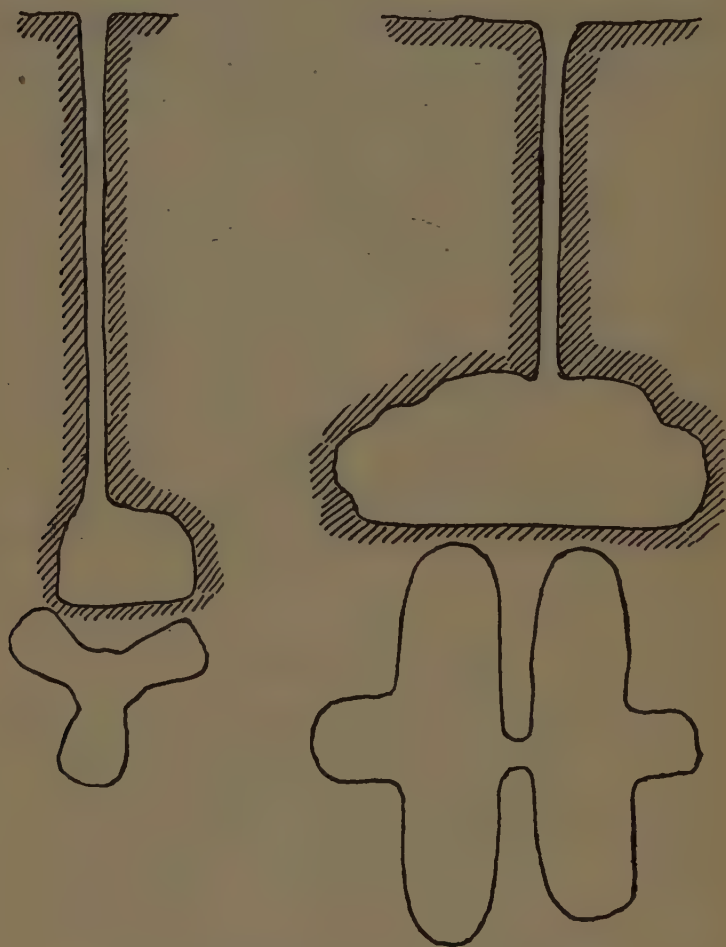


FIG. 57.—Elevation and Plan of Dene Holes,
Jorden's Wood.

and 12 ft. to 18 ft. in height. Each shaft leads to a separate cave or series of chambers, and in no instance is there any connection with the chambers

of another shaft, although the division wall is often very thin.

They are generally found in the neighbourhood of a camp or site of a village; in Jorden's Wood, between Darenth and Cray, in Kent, are the enclosures of a British village, and near by are clusters of dene-holes at Stankey and Cavey Spring, while in Hangman's Wood, near Grays, in Essex, is a group of seventy-two. So numerous are they in some districts that they are a danger to a two-fold degree—not only as a pitfall hidden by an undergrowth of brushwood, but by the choked shaft falling in, as they have proved on Blackheath and at Woolwich.

Their age apparently dates from the Neolithic period to the Early Iron Age, by the axe marks left by the excavators, and by the relics of domestic utensils of the Stone Age, and British pottery. Bones of animals have also been found, but they are not usually of so early a period, and their presence may be accounted for by having been thrown into the mouth of the shaft.

It is doubtful whether these dene-holes were store-houses or dwelling places in time of need, though all evidence strengthens the former conclusion. Diodorus Siculus speaks of the construction of pits by the Britons in which the ears of corn were stored, and in confirmation of this the floors of some of these caves are covered to a considerable depth by a mouldy black humus which is apparently grain, decayed by the lapse of ages; while in Essex grains of wheat, petrified and black, were discovered.

Those at Crayford were apparently in the first instance excavated as flint mines by a Neolithic people, to obtain flints for the produce of implements; they descend from 25 ft. to 50 ft. in depth, to a prolific strata of flints within the chalk. One of these has

been used by the Romans as a midden, or hole into which to cast rubbish, which contained a vast number of fragments of pottery, Upchurch and Samian ware, and the bones of edible animals and birds, the refuse of their meals. In another were evidences of a fire having been lighted, and that flint knapping had been worked within it.

(f) AMPHITHEATRES.

Outside the walls of Roman military stations are frequently found the remains of amphitheatres, as at Caerleon, Cirencester, Dorchester, Richborough, Silchester, and elsewhere ; but they are not attached to towns of civil communities. Whilst some are of considerable size, others are comparatively small, not large enough for charioteer competitions, but allowing ample space for various sports, military exercises, or gladiatorial shows. At the station of BORCOVICUS, on the Roman Wall, is a work erroneously said to be an amphitheatre, it is, in fact, a quarry.

The greater number of these are of earth only, with no sign of stone seats, and it has been suggested that the cold climate of Britain led to the adoption of wooden benches. There are, however, exceptions, and in the amphitheatre of Castell, in Anglesey, remains of stone seats are still in position on the southern side of the circus.

At Caerleon the amphitheatre is called "King Arthur's Round Table," and the same name is given to another near Brougham Hall. The latter consists of a circular mound about 300 ft. in diameter, within which is a broad platform, then a ditch encircling a flat arena 175 ft. in diameter ; it has two entrances opposite each other.

The plan of these earthworks, though sometimes

circular, is generally elliptical; this is the case at Dorchester, where the theatre—commonly called “Mambury Rings”—situated on the Via Iceniana, a short distance from the southern gate of the city, is constructed of chalk and turf. It has two entrances, one at either end of the long axis, with the arena slightly convex on the surface, and indications of graded seats for the spectators. The long ages of exposure to all weathers is enough to have obliterated the tiers of seats where the works are but of earth, and it is marvellous that any trace of them can yet be distinguished.

At Cirencester the construction of the amphitheatre was made to serve two purposes with one system of labour; a supply of oolitic stone for the buildings of the city was quarried designedly to form the circus at the same time. Here the arena, about 148 ft. long by 129 ft. broad, is surrounded by a mound rising fully 24 ft. in height, except at the two ends where the entrances are situated. It is locally called “The Bull Ring,” and it is known that the Jacobite Club of this town baited bulls within the enclosure in the early part of the 18th century.

At Charterhouse, Somersetshire, a Roman mining station, the amphitheatre is on the slope of a hill to the north of the station; at Ilchester it is by the side of the Fosse Way; at Richborough one is situated on the highest part of the hill south-west of the town; and at Verulam, immediately beyond the long lake that formerly protected the northern side of the city, the amphitheatre was reached by a causeway from the Decuman Gate.

The amphitheatre at Silchester is close to a small gate, north of the eastern angle of the city walls, and on the outer side of the fosse. This also is elliptical, but approaching a circle, the arena being 150 ft. long

and 125 ft. broad, with the entrance towards the south.

At Hamdon Hill, Somerset, is an example nearly perfectly round; the arena is 67 ft. in diameter, and the surrounding bank for the spectators rises at an angle of thirty degrees. That at Castell, Anglesea (Figs. 58, 59), is also circular, with an internal diameter

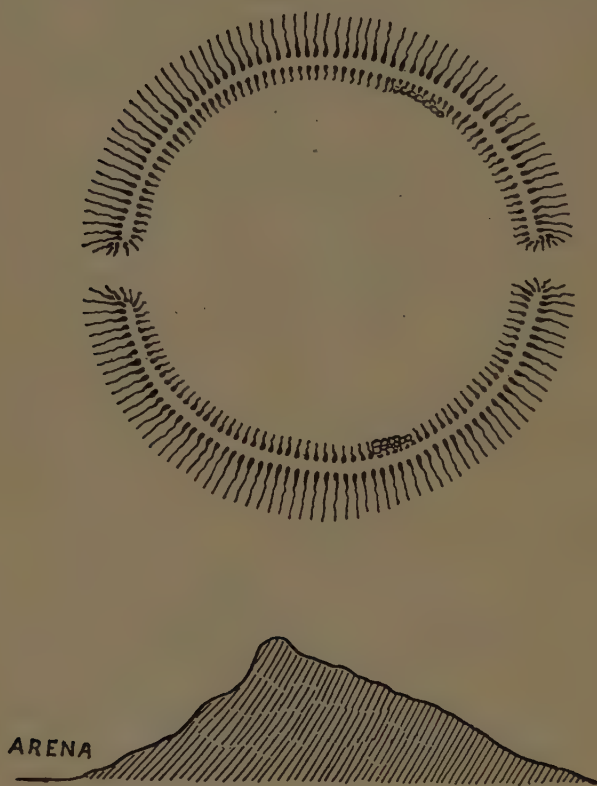


FIG. 58.—Plan and Section of the Amphi-theatre at Castell, Anglesea.

of 165 ft.; the mound around it is 30 ft. wide and 12 ft. high, composed of clay. It is in this theatre that a fragment of the stone seat remains, while the

beds of three higher tiers have been traced. The wall around part of the circus is a modern addition.

These amphitheatres are undoubtedly of Roman design, and probably—such is the irony of conquest—they were constructed by the British under the superintendence of their conquerors, for their own countrymen to become a spectacle and diversion to the invaders of a southern race who were indifferent to bloody sports. It is unlikely that there were many contests between savage beasts and prisoners of war in this country, but every probability that the conquered were made to contend one against another, even to the death, for the sport of the victors.

In Cornwall are a number of similar theatres, or "Rounds," locally known as a *Plân-au-Guare*, a "place of play," in which the miracle plays of the Middle



FIG. 59.—Amphitheatre at Castell, Anglesea.

Ages were performed. Those at St. Just and St. Piran's Round are the most perfect; the latter has a diameter of 135 ft., and the mound is 10 ft. high, with traces of seven rows of seats and a level summit for standing room. It is computed to hold 2,000 spectators, but the Round of Gwennap would accommodate ten times that number.

The origin of these rounds is unknown, but possibly they were prehistoric works adapted for mediæval plays. At a more recent date they were used as preaching centres by John Wesley and other Methodist revivalists.

(g) FISH-PONDS.

In the grounds of manor houses and within the precincts of religious houses various embanked hollows are frequently found, the original use of which was for long a subject for conjecture and speculation; but it is now conclusive that they were fish-ponds, or stews, wherein a supply of fresh water fish were preserved. They are more plentifully found in the Midland counties, far from the sea coast where fresh fish was easily obtainable.

Dams of earth thrown across brooks have locked the waters and provided reservoirs from a very early period. Although Neolithic remains have been found within the embankments, it does not prove that they were wrought by a prehistoric people, but rather that the Saxons built them of earth from sites occupied in previous ages, for their existence can occasionally be proven to be as old as the Saxon era.

When the conditions of living in the Middle Ages are considered, and the prevalence of the terrible scourge of leprosy with the contributable causes

is understood, the urgency of fresh food will be apparent.

In mediæval times salted meats, salted fish, and even salted vegetables, was the prevailing food among the affluent. The season of Martinmas was devoted to the killing of animals; the flesh cut into strips and salted were called callops, and this was the staple provision until the Monday before Ash-Wednesday—known as Callop Monday—when the remainder of the stock was consumed before the commencement of the Lenten Fast.

Fish, also, salted for keeping, was an important item for the table; this was frequently insufficiently pickled and went bad, and nothing has proved so sure a source of leprosy than fish in a semi-putrid state.

Documents of domestic life show the precautions taken in the attempt to preserve health, and although it is an instance of one beyond the reach of the ordinary family, the roll of household expenses of Bishop Swinfield of Hereford, in the 13th century, may be used as an illustration. On March 15th and 17th are entries of the salted fish and vegetables served at an entertainment, although that prelate possessed a "great fish-stew" at Ross containing pike and bream; pike and tench being kept in another pond at Ledbury, and his tenants of the wear at Sugwas paid their rents in salmon and eels.

To guard against contracting leprosy, the well-to-do stocked fish in excavated and embanked ponds contiguous to their houses; whilst the monasteries were provided in the same way for a fish diet for the inmates of the infirmary and for the numerous guests, both noble and common, who constantly taxed the resources of these institutions, in addition to the dispensation of hospitality to the traveller, the pilgrim,

and the wayfarer: the same food was also required for liturgical observances.

Fish-stews on an extensive scale may be found on the lands of the former Augustinian Priory of Kirby Bellars, Leicestershire, the Premonstratensian Abbey of Croxton Kerrial, and many other conventual houses; indeed, Mr. J. French is convinced that it was the existence of ancient ponds that determined the site for the foundation of certain monasteries, and he instances the Priories of Dunmow and Leigh.¹

Hospitals for the dread disease were founded throughout England, and on the site of the principal house at Burton Lazars, in Leicestershire, are extensive embanked divisions for the keeping of fish.

Examples of fish-ponds in manorial enclosures are numerous; some are fed by water from neighbouring streams, others are supplied by springs rising within the bed of the pond. The grounds of Humberston Manor near Leicester, Sibthorpe and Greasley in Nottinghamshire, may be noticed among other places as possessing a series of these earthworks; those at Greasley—illustrated in Fig. 50, p. 95—occupy one corner of the enclosure, and consist of a number of parallel ponds with two others at right angles to them; in some of these arise springs whence the water would be conducted into the others, thence into the moat, and an outlet was provided for the overflow. One of the most remarkable among fish-ponds is in the parish of Elmeſthorpe, Leicestershire, where an enormous embanked pond—within which are a large number of oblong and oval islands—was fed by a stream flowing through its midst. Since it was drained in 1710 the islands remain as mounds, from which may have originated its present name of “Billington Rough.”

¹ *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, X, 257.

(h) TUMULI.

A tumulus is a mound of earth over an interment. It is also called a "barrow" in England, from the Saxon, denoting a hill, or little hill. A conjectural origin for the word has suggested that it was derived from *Berewe*, the Saxon for wheelbarrow, because it was probable that the earth forming the mound had been conveyed to the spot in a hand-barrow.

These burial mounds are known in different localities by various names, as: in Yorkshire, *Houe* and *How*; in Shropshire, *Tump*; in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, *Low*; in Scotland and parts of England, *Law*; and in Ireland, *Larwe*. At the same time, these names are frequently used more widely than in their special province.

Sometimes tumuli are formed of earth different from the soil on which they stand, but we are enlightened on this point by a reference to Tacitus,¹ who describes how the bones of warriors fallen in battle in the camp of Varus were honoured by every soldier bringing a turf, or turves, from the surface of the land for the raising of a tumulus. This mode of erection also did away with the necessity of making a hollow in the vicinity of the mound for the supply of the required earth; and the decay of the vegetable matter accounts for the reduction of the original height of the barrow.

These mounds have been raised over the bodies of the ancient Britons, the Romans, and the Saxons; over Pagans and Christians. That it was considered a heathen practice when the country was generally Christian, is seen by the words of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who recounts that, after the decapitation

¹ *Annals*, Book I, c. 61.

of Hengist, he was buried, and a heap of earth raised over his body *according to the custom of the pagans*.

Existing tumuli are usually found on high land ; but from the earliest chronicles we learn that the Britons buried not only on hill-tops and cliffs, but in secluded valleys, on the banks of rivers, and on the sea-shore. A few references to tumuli burial will help in understanding this custom.

In the Elegy of Owain ap Urien, in *Taliesin*, we read :—

“ Reged’s chief the green turf covers.”

Of Pryderi, or Gwri Gwalt Euryn, one of the chief swineherds of Britain, it is said :—

“ In Abergemoli is the grave of Pryderi,
Where the waves beat against the shore.”

Englynion y Beddau.

An extant poem by Hgwel, son of Owain Gwynedd, opens thus :—

“ The white wave mantled with foam bedews the grave,
The resting place of Rhuvawn Pebyr, chief of kings.”

Myvyrian Archaiology, I, p. 277.

Of Dyvel mab Erbin :—

“ His grave was in the plains of Gwesledin.”

Myv. Arch., I, 81.

In “ *The Reproof of the Bards* ” :—

“ A barb that will not silence me,
Silence may he not obtain
Till he goes to be covered
Under gravel and pebbles.”—*Taliesin*.

In the *Memorials of the Graves of the Warriors* a stanza in honour of Kynon reads :—

“ The grave of a warrior of high renown
Is in a lofty region—but a lowly bed,
The grave of Kynon the son of Clydno Eiddin.”

A few curious instances occur of the verification of that which had long been considered but poetical legend. The *Mabinogi of Bronwen*, the daughter of Llyr, one of the most popular heroines of British romance, relates how she broke her heart, and "they made her a four-sided grave and buried her upon the banks of the Alaw." In 1813 a farmer living at Ynys Bronwen, on the banks of the River Alaw, in the Isle of Anglesea, saw a stone peeping through the grass of a circular mound and thought it would be useful in the repair of his farm buildings, so he dug it out and found it to be a portion of a four-sided *cist*, or uncemented coffin, containing an urn full of ashes and half-calcined bones.

Another instance was at Castle Gwalchmai (in English "Walwyn's Castle"), on the coast of Rhos, Pembrokeshire, where William of Malmesbury¹ records that the tomb of Gwalchmai, the noble nephew of King Arthur, was found on the sea-coast of Wales in the time of William I, and it was 14 ft. long.

In the *Triads* we find that certain great warriors, chieftains who led the battle, termed "Pillars of Battle of the Island of Britain," after death received the appellation of the "Grave slaughtering warriors of the Island of Britain," from the belief that they avenged their wrongs from the interior of the grave; an idea which explains the inclusion of the deceased's war harness and weapons within the barrow.

Attached to these "Graves of the Giants," as they were formerly called in Devonshire, Norfolk, and elsewhere, and in the poem "*Beowulf*," was a superstition that if they were disturbed by the spade the spirit of the body there interred would avenge the sacrilege by afflicting the spoiler with trouble, ailment, or death. An example of this is given by

¹ *Lives of the Kings*, A.D. 1086.

Westcote¹ in the opening of a tumulus known as "Broaken Barrow," in the parish of Challacombe, Devon. An old man obtained stones and earth from this mound wherewith to build his cottage, and piercing into the centre of the tumulus he found a place like an oven, strongly and closely walled up; breaking through this he espied an earthen pot, and thinking he had found a treasure thrust in his arm to seize it, when he heard a noise described as the tramping of horses; at a second attempt the same phenomenon was experienced, but the third time he succeeded, only to find that it contained a few ashes and bones. His temerity was widely said to have been the cause of the loss of his senses and his death three months later.

Barrows contain cists—the four-sided grave of the *Mabinogi*—chambers, urns, and various arrangements for the burial, either by inhumation or after cremation; but these form another subject, only the exterior formation of the mound comes within the title of Earthworks, and it is only so far as the articles within decide the period to which the interment belongs that it affects this subject.

Two forms of tumuli predominate; the *Long Barrow* is the earlier and larger form, and may be considered as a family or tribal grave, while the *Round Barrow* of a later period was for a single interment.

Long barrows occur in isolated positions, and are divided into two classes, the chambered and unchambered; this again affects only the internal plan, with the exception that the simple or unchambered barrow frequently has a trench along each side, but not around the ends.

¹ *View of Devonshire.*

Long barrows usually have the long axis east and west, and the eastern portion—in which is the burial—is higher and broader than the west end. Their

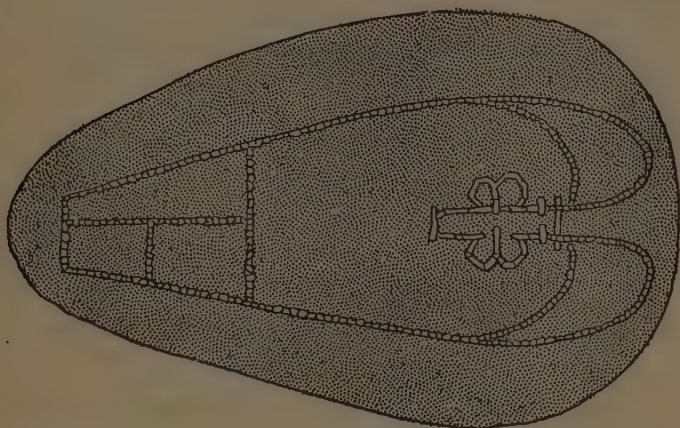


FIG. 60.—Plan of Long Tumulus, Uley, Gloucestershire.

appearance has been compared to half a pear or half an egg, and they extend from 100 to over 300 ft. in length, from 30 ft. to 50 ft. wide, and from 3 ft. to 12 ft. in height.

In the Saxon poem "*Beowulf*" we find a tumulus described as surrounded with a wall, and in sundry cases we know from early drawings that they were girt at the base by a series of erect stones, though most of these have now been appropriated for building and other purposes. A drawing of such stones—forming a Peristalith—at West Kennet, is illustrated by Stukeley.

Long barrows are most numerous in Wiltshire, and are invariably of an early Stone Age.

The great majority of tumuli throughout England are round, and belong to all the early periods of Stone, Bronze, and Iron, representing the sepulchres of Briton, Roman, Dane, and Saxon.

Round barrows, frequently in groups, approach a circle in plan, and in modern phraseology are classified according to the sectional elevations as—Bowl-shaped, Bell-shaped, and Disk-shaped. The bowl-shaped is

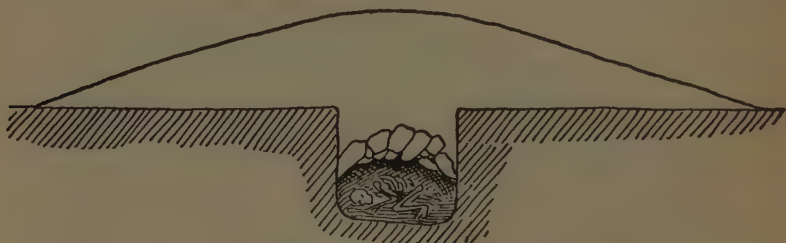


FIG. 61.—Section of Bowl-shaped Tumulus, East Kennet, Wilts.

at times boldly round, a weather-worn mound; in other examples—as at East Kennet—it is shallow; occasionally it has a ditch at its immediate base.

The bell-shaped has a small platform or terrace around the base of the mound, and surrounding it a trench and low outer bank.

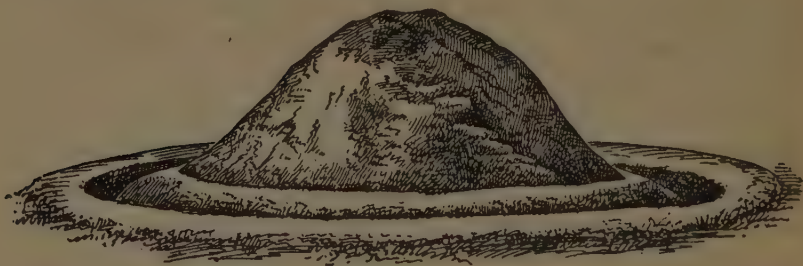


FIG. 62.—Bell-shaped Tumulus. Upton Great Barrow.

The disk-shaped may be compared to a shallow

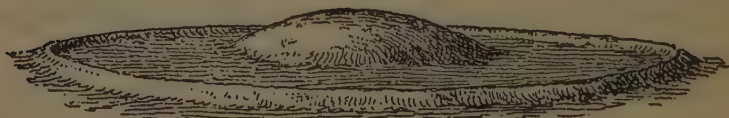


FIG. 63.—“Shooter’s Hut.” Disk-shaped Tumulus, Longmynd, Shropshire.

dish inverted, a raised rim surrounding an area containing the mound, that called "Shooter's Hut" on the Longmynd, in Shropshire, is a good example.

Roman tumuli are found along the route of ancient roads. It was a primitive custom to bury the dead by the roadside, and was probably more closely observed after Tiberius enjoined that places of sepulture were to be made points of mensuration. An extraordinary group of this period is at Bartlow, Essex, contiguous to the road from Linton to Ashdon.

Certain large burial mounds are occasionally found which belong to neither of the above divisions. Some of these are huge, similar to long barrows, but presenting little difference between the two ends; they have been compared to the roof of a house, and to

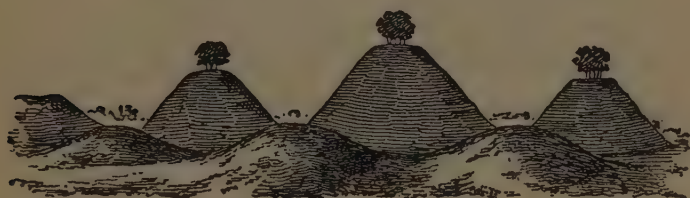


FIG. 64.—Group of Roman Tumuli, Bartlow Hills, Essex.

the keel of a ship inverted, such are called Ship Barrows by Norwegian antiquaries. The laws of Frotho II, king of Denmark, directed that the body of a deceased noble should be buried on a funeral pyre constructed of his own ship;¹ and the royal tombs of that people were built to the size and figure of a great ship, upon which the earthen mound was raised. Such tumuli containing vessels and ship-like structures have been excavated in Denmark and Norway. Few of such monuments might be expected in Great Britain, but two have been found

¹ *Hist. Danica*, lib. v.

—at Dundalk and Mayo—in which the stone chambers within resemble the general form of ships.

At Cossington, Leicestershire, is a huge mound known as “Shipley Hill,” and is probably a tumulus of this description. Another, in the parish of Snape, in Suffolk, was recently opened—and destroyed—when it was found to contain the fragments of a ship 48 ft. long and 10 ft. broad amidships, within which were the relics of an interment. All such barrows probably date from the Viking Age.

A great mound, almost circular, known as Lamel Hill, a short distance along the road from York towards Heslington, has a diameter from the north

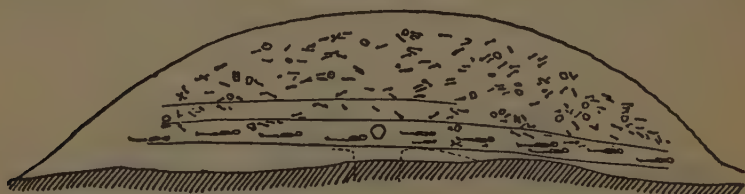


FIG. 65.—Tumular Cemetery, Lamel Hill.

to south of 125 ft., and from east to west 110 ft. ; the circumference at the base is 375 ft., and its highest point is 22 ft. This was explored in the middle of the 19th century and found to be a tumular cemetery of the Saxons. In the base of the mound a number of undisturbed skeletons were lying with their feet towards the east, but above them the earth had been turned over, and innumerable bones were promiscuously intermixed with the soil.

The idea of treasure being hidden within the ancient earthworks was prevalent, not only with regard to certain camps, but in tumuli also, a belief which has led to extensive vandalism and the destruction of innumerable grave mounds. Such a

tradition was attached to a tumulus at Largo, in Fifeshire, wherein, it was said, a rich mine of gold was enclosed. At this spot a ghost, supposed to be the genius of the mine, once appeared and promised to tell a shepherd, at a certain time and on certain conditions, "where the gold mine is in Largo Law," enjoining that the horn, sounded for the housing of the cows at the adjacent farm of Balmain, should not be blown. The ghost was true to his tryst, but at the psychological moment when about to divulge the secret, the cowherd—Tammie Norrie—sounded a blast loud and long. Thereupon the ghost vanished, with the denunciation:—

" Woe to the man that blew the horn,
For out of the spot he shall ne'er be borne !"

The cowherd fell dead, and a cairn of stones was raised over his body on the spot. From a time earlier than the memory of the oldest inhabitant this was supposed to be the origin of Norries' Law, and the hillock was regarded as uncanny.

Silbury Hill, in Wiltshire, was for long said to be the largest of all tumuli ; it covers an area of nearly six acres, and stands about 170 ft. high. When, however, it was explored, it was found to be of no sepulchral character ; it was a cumulus, or simply a mighty artificial mound, which may possibly have been connected with the mystic rites of the adjacent temple of Avebury.

(i) MOOT HILLS.

Moot Hills were the eminences upon which were held the judicial assemblies of the ancient inhabitants, Britons, Saxons, and Norsemen ; and, where possible, the British and Norse appear to have appropriated the

grave mound, or tumulus, of some great man, for this purpose, because it was thought the spirit of the deceased wise man there interred would influence the proceedings. For a definite record of this idea we may refer to the Scandinavians, who need not be considered altogether foreign to Britain seeing how they have indelibly left their influence in this land.

The meetings of the *Ting* in Scandinavia were upon the *grafhög*, or tomb of a noble, and we read in the Frithjoff's Saga how, at a Ting held upon the tumulus of King Bele, Frithjoff exclaimed—

“ We stand upon Bele's grave ! Each word
Down in its depths by his shade is heard.”

The ancient British word *Gorsedd* signified a tumulus used as a seat of judicature. Crug gorseddawl, the hill of judicature in Flintshire, is supposed to be the grave of St. Almedha ; and Gorsedd Wen, in Denbighshire, is thought to be the grave of Gwen, one of the sons of Llywarch Hen, Prince of the Cambrian Britons in the early half of the 6th century. Gwen fell mortally wounded at the Ford of the Morlas, and this bell-shaped tumulus is within 450 ft. of that river. When it was explored in 1850 a cairn was found within containing the skeleton of a man 6ft. 7 in. in height, and a bronze dagger blade by the bones of his right hand, which had lain across his breast.

The *Mabinogi of Mynnweir and Mynord* relates a fabulous instance of the Gorsedd being used, not only as the hill of judicature but the place of execution also. Manawyddan, the son of Llyr, had his crofts of ripened wheat invaded by a host of mice, each unit of which carried off an ear. Pursuing them he captured the hindermost, and carried it to the Gorsedd of Narbeth, where, on the highest part, he erected two forked sticks, and placed a crossbeam upon the two



The Tynwald Hill, Isle of Man.

forks. Upon this gallows he prepared to execute justice upon the thief; but the bishop coming upon the scene declared it was his wife transformed to the figure of a mouse, and after much parlance he was allowed to redeem her. This is paralleled, in fact, in Britain, where some of the Moot Hills were used as the Gallows Hill until comparatively recently.

We are told that the great law-giver Dyffnmal Moelmud adopted these sites for the promulgation of decrees.¹ The judicial mound, Tomen y Môr, has a base circumference of 381 ft. inside the moat, and is 36 ft. high. Tomen Dolbenmaen is 360 ft. in circumference and 20 ft. high.

The Danish King Orrey originated the meeting of the Tynwald, or estates, in the Isle of Man. The name is a compound of the Norse *Ting*, a popular assembly or Court of Justice, and *Vold*, a bank or mound. The same name is found in the Tinwald Hill, Dumfries-shire.

Tynwald Hill in the Isle of Man, proved to be sepulchral, has a circumference of 246 ft., and is 18 ft. high, with four verdant terraces, each rising 3 ft. above another, upon which the insular assembly still meets on the 5th of July (see Plate).

The same survival of the Norse name is seen in the Thing Houe outside the north gate of Bury St. Edmund's. On this hill the Thing of the town was held until, in the time of Edward the Confessor, the monks of St. Edmund's Abbey obtained jurisdiction over the town and one mile radius beyond, when the townsfolk transferred their judicial assembly to a tumulus at Catteshill, and eventually to the Hen Houe. The Thing Houe continued to be used as the Gallows Hill until A.D. 1766, when the last execution took place on that spot. In the latter part

¹ J. G. Williams, *Brit. Mus. Add. MSS.* 28, 860.

of the 19th century excavation proved it to be a tumulus of British times ; and although it is now built over, the ancient name survives in the "THINGOE HUNDRED."

On the eastern bank of the Avon, Wiltshire, at Downton, is a semi-circular earthwork, the southern extremity of which has always borne the name of "Moot-Hill." The town was patronised and elevated by King Cyneigils in the 7th century, when the hill was possibly first used for assemblies.

The Hill of Cuckamsley, or Cwichelmsley, preserving the name of King Cwichelm, was the place of assembly for the people of Berkshire. At Abury the enclosure within the fosse comprises $28\frac{1}{2}$ acres. The fosse is inside the great earthen bank which slopes down to the base of the fosse like the inclined plane of an ancient amphitheatre ; the circle is much larger than that at Stonehenge, and has the appearance of having been the meeting-place of a great assembly. It has been suggested that it provided accommodation for the whole male population of freemen of the Mercian kingdom.

The Saxon name of "Moot" survives to the present day, but the assemblies have long met beneath a roof instead of upon a hill, sepulchral or otherwise. It is long since it was thought necessary to meet above the bones of the dead for the power of his spirit to guide the councillors, or that witchcraft might work mischief among the wise except beneath the lofty vault of the clouds ; and in the Isle of Man remains the only instance of the use of an earthwork as the place of an assembly.

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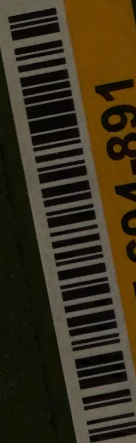
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